

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



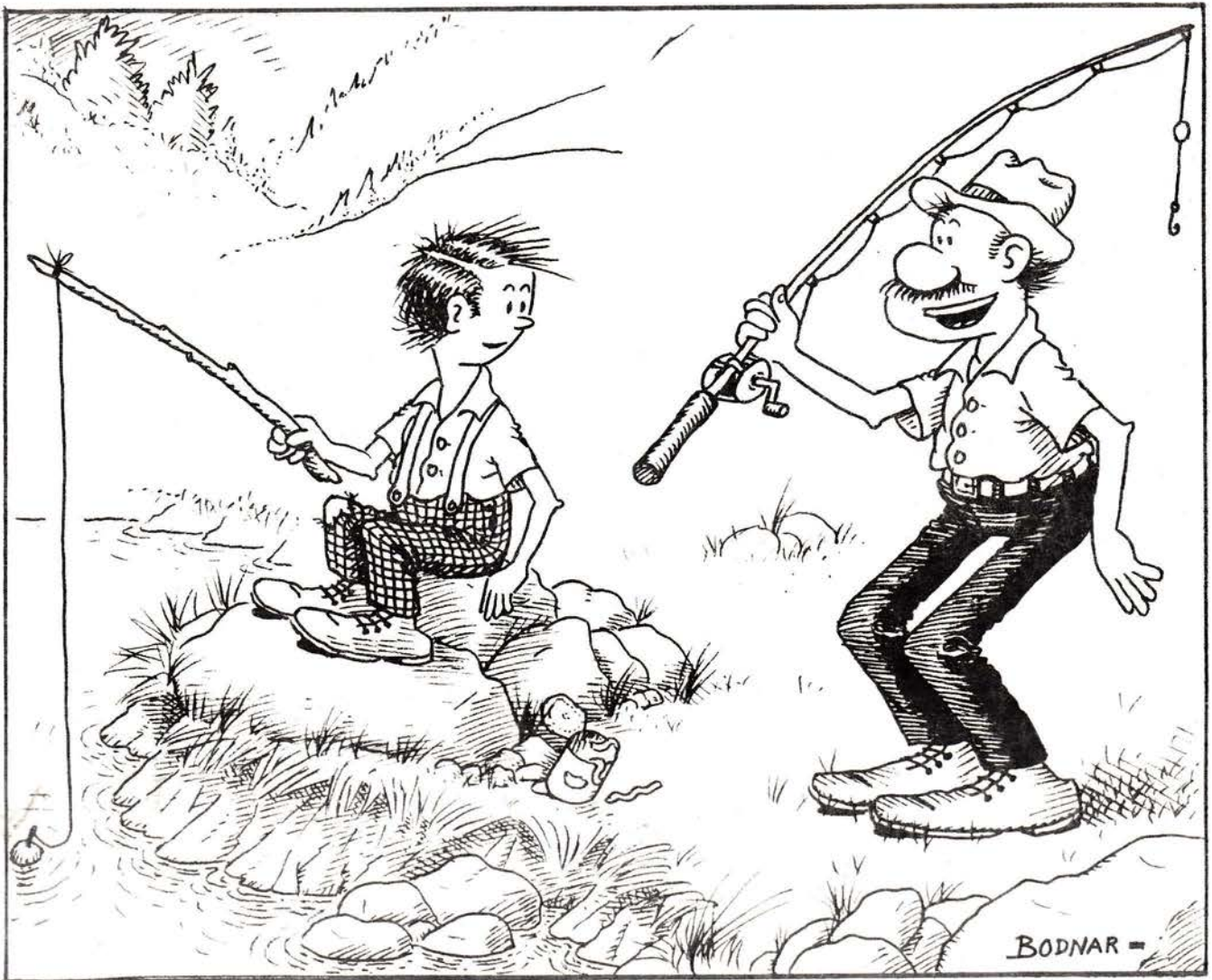
Jack Bales, Editor  
1214 W. College Ave.  
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

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"Here, you can use my fishing rod and reel while I'm gone. I'm going to the "Connecticut Conclave" Convention of the Horatio Alger Society!"

(Original cartoon drawn especially for Newsboy by amateur cartoonist Louis Bodnar, 1502 Laurel Ave., Chesapeake, Virginia 23325).

## 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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Newsboy, the official organ of the Horatio Alger Society, is published monthly (bimonthly January-February and June-July) and is distributed to HAS members. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$10.00. Cost for single issues of Newsboy is \$1.00 apiece.

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.

\* \* \*

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

PF-368 Gary Scharnhorst  
333 Prestonwood - #702  
Richardson, Texas 75081

PF-395 Irving P. Leif  
55-04 Fox Run Drive  
Plainsboro, N. J. 08536

\* \* \*

## BOOK MART

The listing of Alger books in this department is free to HAS members. Please list title, publisher, condition, and price.

Chris Novak, 12517A Western Cape Drive, St. Louis, Missouri, writes that "I'm looking for additional Alger stories to add to my collection — not new titles, new stories. I'm not particularly interested in a book's condition or appearance, just so long as it is readable." Some needed titles include Fame and Fortune, Ben the Luggage Boy, Luck and Pluck, Do and Dare, Adrift in the City, Frank Hunter's Peril, A Boy's Fortune, Rupert's Ambition, Rough and Ready, Rufus and Rose, Young Circus Rider, Digging for Gold, Victor Vane, Frank and Fearless, Jed the Poorhouse Boy, and Lester's Luck.

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## POEMS WORTH READING

Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Editor's note: The following poem is from the collection of Jack Bales. It originally appeared in the December 12, 1920 issue of the New York Herald, Section II, p. 2).

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Horatio Alger, Jr., you were once my  
greatest joy;  
I revelled in your stories when a happy  
care free boy;  
There was William Makepeace Thackeray,  
a novelist of note;  
There were Bulwer, Scott and Dickens,  
But they got my childish goat;  
They didn't have the pep and zip,  
Horatio, that you did,  
For you got underneath the vest of  
every blooming kid,  
And a myriad critics felt your

fascinating punch,  
So, they crowned you king, Horatio, of  
the literary bunch!

Horatio Alger, Jr., all the types of  
boys you drew,  
Poor urchins of the streets, revealed  
the gentle soul of you;  
There were Ragged Dick and Tattered  
Tom, with others of their kind,  
Who all bespoke an honest heart, a pure  
unselfish mind;  
Through trials and temptations they  
most perilously passed  
Till virtue was triumphant, good Horatio,  
at the last;  
And as their thorny paths through life  
your humble heroes trod  
Each chapter was illumined by your sim-  
ple faith in God!

Horatio Alger, Jr., long ago your busy  
pen  
Was laid aside, but to the hearts of  
grizzled, gray haired men  
Come visions of their idol, and your  
name they often bless,  
For you helped them not a little in  
their measure of success;  
You were loved by hosts, Horatio, and  
you filled an honored place;  
The memory of all your good time never  
can efface;  
And, if but a single blossom each old  
boy admirer gave,  
What a mountain of sweet fragrance  
there would rise above your grave!

\* \* \*

#### NEWSBOY EDITORIAL

"The Incident at Brewster"

by Jack Bales

Probably nothing arouses the ire of HAS members more than the mention of "the Brewster Incident." As any reader of the boring Horatio's Boys [By Edwin Hoyt, Chilton Book Co., Radnor, Pa., 1974] knows, Horatio Alger was asked to leave his church at Brewster, Massachusetts in 1866. Some twentieth century writers on Alger state that the records at the Unitarian Church show him to have been a homosexual and that is the reason he was forced to quit his ministry. Defenders of Alger maintain, however, that the records are vague, that the

subject of "his unnatural familiarity with boys" never came up in later life, that people today do not know enough about the "church climate" of the 1860's to validly judge the 113 year old journal entries, and that the author's personal life has nothing to do with the writings he produced.

Reference to his Brewster years did surface later, however. Gary Scharnhorst pointed out that in one of Alger's many letters to his young friend Irving Blake, Alger maintained that he had "studied theology chiefly as a branch of literary culture" and had not "intended to devote myself to it as a profession." A direct reference, however, to his Brewster years does not appear in the over 150 Alger letters that Gary and I have examined.

I have been toying with the idea of printing the Brewster data for over two years, if only to let people read it in its unedited form and not truncated in some sleazy expose. As could be expected, I ran into some opposition. Close long time friend Carl Hartmann wrote me several letters on the subject, thoughtfully written opinions that I examined carefully and deliberately, since there are few people whose opinions I value more than Carl's. In one letter he said, "I feel that most people that have heard about it have received the information from others already and it is redundant to hash it over again. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I can see no reason to print it. . . . My biggest worry is that people will take it for gospel even though (unless you have information I don't have) it was never proven and he was never convicted, indicted, or anything for it. They will not realize that kissing in public or a girl showing her ankles was considered immoral in that day. . . . Jack, some of my favorite authors were . . . gay, and I don't care what a man or woman's sexual preference is - that's their business. But the Brewster material makes Alger sound like a monster. . . ."

Carl, being a past Newsboy Editor, knows of the decisions that are a part of the job. In a letter to me recently he wrote: "Jack, you are the Editor and until someone wants to do the job, do it the way you want to!!!! If our members don't like it (including me) that's tough. I don't think you are trying to win a popularity contest [I'm not!!] so do what you think is right. . . . You are the editor - you are the boss - and until you give it up you do as you please!!!!!!!!!"

There are other opinions. In the Introduction to Gilbert K. Westgard's reissue of Alger: A Biography Without a Hero (see review elsewhere in this issue), Mayes quotes Ralph D. Gardner, author of Horatio Alger; Or, The American Hero Era [N.Y.: Arco, c1964, 1978] as saying the following:

"Regarding your [Mayes'] last point: Alger's homosexuality. I was the first to discover the records of the Unitarian Church at Brewster—I mean, the first Alger nut; local people always knew. These records just give an inkling that funny business was going on. No direct language that would tell us what happened. Years ago, when I was writing the book [his biography], I showed the transcript of this record—actually, just several vaguely worded lines—to churchmen and legal people...they both said that, although one could and probably would infer the worst, it was far from conclusive—let alone legal proof. So I avoided it."\*

Why am I printing the church records? Because they're a part of Alger history, like it or not, and I am intensely interested in everything about this man's life. Besides, the excerpts from them have appeared in wire stories all over the country and in at least three books. Why not publish it all and let people judge for themselves.

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\* Herbert R. Mayes. Alger: A Biography Without a Hero (Des Plaines, Ill., 1978), pp. xxv-xxvi. Quoted by permission of Mayes and the publisher, Gilbert K. Westgard II.

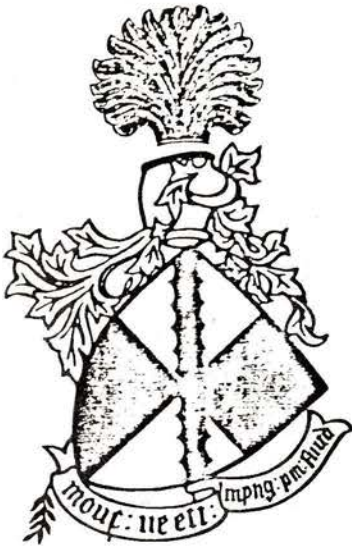
Most importantly, I'm a scholar, and I simply abhor censorship. Personally, I feel that Newsboy should have been the FIRST publication to carry the Brewster material, since we are reportedly the world's only publication devoted to studying Alger, and my definition of studying does not include omitting items which we don't want to look at.

Admittedly, Alger was never tried, but at least these records exist, and I sure cannot say that about those lame chestnuts concerning Alger that I see bandied about year after year. These include:

1. Alger's book Phil, the Fiddler bringing an end to the padrone system. As I have stated before, a thorough study of the 19th century newspaper accounts of the day shows that this is simply untrue. The whole story all stemmed from an 1885 article about Alger that has been repeated through the years.
2. Alger's books selling upwards of 400,000,000. Even half of that is too much.
3. Alger hobnobbing with the socially elite of the day, like Mark Twain and Bret Harte. I have studied Alger for years now, own copies of over 150 of his letters, have access to or own over 700 articles and pieces of primary source material relating to Alger and not one proves that Alger even spoke to any of these people.

THUS, WHY WOULD PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ACCOUNT OF A REAL OCCURRENCE, WHEN I HAVE NEVER HEARD ANY PROTESTS CONCERNING THE ABOVE & OTHER PIECES OF PURE FICTION! If anyone ever shows me concrete evidence, that is, original 19th century data that proves me wrong, I will be only too glad to print it.

The following pages contain an article written by Gil Westgard. I welcome opposing views, and I will print them in my "Newsboy Forum" section. So. . .enough is enough. Let the chips fall where they may!



THE LORING COAT OF ARMS

As most Alger readers know, Aaron K. Loring published many of the authors first editions.

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FOLLOWING THE TRAIL  
OF HORATIO ALGER, JR.

by Gilbert K. Westgard II

Editor's note:

"... we should gratefully admit that modern biographers, in giving us all the facts about the lives of men of genius, are treating us as adults, and not—as biographers of the past have done—as children who have to be told lies about their heroes."

—Stephen Spender, "How Much Should a Biographer Tell?" Saturday Review, IIIIL (January 25, 1964), 17-18.

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"Honi soit qui mal y pense."

—Motto of the Order of the Garter, the oldest and most illustrious British order of Knighthood.

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Following the eleventh annual Horatio Alger Society Convention, I had a few days in which to follow up on some of our hero's activities. About seven hours of driving brought me to the home of Dick Seddon in Winchester, Massachusetts.

It seemed like an extension of the

convention. Dick and I sat up into the wee hours of the morning discussing Alger and examining various editions of his works in Dick's very fine collection.

On Monday morning we went out to Cape Cod to view the original records of the Unitarian Church in Brewster, where Horatio was a minister from December, 1864 to March, 1866.

The church where Horatio preached has changed very little in over a century. It is a plain white frame structure with a good deal of light available from the clear windows. On a metal plaque, along with the names of the other ministers who have served the congregation, is listed the name of Horatio Alger, listing also the dates of his pastorate in Brewster.

However, the reason for his leaving is only to be explained in the parish records. Seeing these original records was the object of our trip.

After asking our guide, Mrs. Parks, the wife of the present minister, we were referred to Walter Babbitt, whom we were informed had access to all of the early records.

A short drive brought us to the home of Mr. Babbitt, and after explaining the purpose of our investigation, our host made a phone call to Henry Baer, President of the Unitarian Church Council in Brewster, to arrange for our inspection of the records.

Back we drove to the parsonage, just across from the church. In the basement Mr. Baer located a box containing all of the early records of the parish, among which was a journal containing the handwritten records of the various parish recorders from 1829 to 1931.

The pages for the years 1864 to 1866 told the story of the call of Mr. Alger "to settle over this Society, provided the terms can be made satisfactory," to the time when he "hastily left town in the very next train for

parts unknown." (The full entries of this record book are reproduced in this issue of Newsboy so that those who wish to have the evidence of Alger's Cape Cod problems set before them may read them without editorial comment).

An examination of the microfilmed copies of the Yarmouth Register in the Public Library at Yarmouth also revealed that at about the same time as Alger hastily left Brewster, he had just been elected as the president of the Cadets for Temperance. No mention was made in the newspaper of Alger's departure, though several weeks later it was mentioned in passing that the pulpit of the Unitarian Church in Brewster was vacant. Such understatement!

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From First Parish in Brewster Records:

November 13, 1864: Sunday afternoon

"Voted - To write the Rev. Mr. Alger (who has been supplying the pulpit for several Sundays) to settle over this Society, provided the terms can be made satisfactory."

November 26, 1864: Saturday afternoon

"Voted. The Parish committee engage the Rev. Mr. Alger for one year at a salary of eight hundred dollars (\$800.) per annum. in case of any dissatisfaction the Parish is to give Mr. A. three months notice before dismissing him and he is to give the same notice if he wishes to leave."

March 6, 1866: Tuesday afternoon

"Voted Not to engage the Rev. Mr. Alger for the ensuing year--"

then

"Voted to reconsider the foregoing vote"

then

"Voted to adjourn to Tuesday March 13th at two o'clock P.M."

March 13, 1866: Wednesday afternoon

"Voted to excuse Tully Crosby from serving on the Parish Committee the

ensuing year. . .to excuse Solomon Freeman (same) . . . same for Freeman Cobb." (These men were chosen as the Parish Committee at the previous meeting on March 6, 1866).

then

"Voted an investigating Committee of three be chosen to investigate Parish affairs and report at the meeting to be held on Monday March 19th."

then

"Committee reported the names of Elisha Bangs, S. H. Gould and Thomas Crocker as an investigating Committee, who were accepted by the meeting."

March 19, 1866: Monday afternoon at two o'clock

"Voted the clerk be requested to amend his record of the 5th vote at the meeting held on Wednesday March 19th, and insert 'to investigate certain reports in relation to Mr. Alger' in place of the 'to investigate Parish affairs.'"

"Voted to accept and record the report of the investigating committee. Report of Committee--

"We learn from John Clark and Thomas S. Crocker that Horatio Alger Jr. has been practicing on them at different times deeds that are too revolting to relate. Said charges were put to the said Alger and he did not deny them. He admitted that he had been imprudent and considered his connection with the Unitarian Society of Brewster dissolved.

Signed Elisha Bangs, S. H. Gould, Thos. Crocker, Committee"

March 19, 1866:

"Voted a Committee of three be appointed by the chair to forward a letter in relation to Mr. Alger to the American Unitarian Association. Chair appointed Solm Freeman, Elisha Bangs. and Geo. Copeland on said Committee. The Committee came in with the following letter which was read and unanimously adopted and ordered to be recorded."

"Brewster March 19-1866 advise us as to what further duties on us as a christian Society.

"To the Rev. Chas Lowe,  
Sec. of the American Unitarian Association, Boston

"Solomon Freeman, Elisha Bangs,  
Geo. Copeland Committee"

"Dear Sir

March 19, 1866:

"The undersigned a committee of the Unitarian Society in Brewster duly chosen for the purpose, at an adjourned meeting of said society held this 19th day of March 1866 would represent that it becomes our painful duty to communicate to you and through you to the American Unitarian Association. That Horatio Alger Jr. who has officiated as our minister for about fifteen months past has recently been charged with gross immorality and a most heinous crime, a crime of no less magnitude than the abominable and revolting crime of unnatural familiarity with boys, which is too revolting to think of in the most brutal of our race—the commission of which under any circumstances, is to a refined or christian mind to be utterly incomprehensible---

"Brewster March 19--1866

"The above communication was presented by our Comttee, [sic] and voted unanimously to accept and adopt the same in the name of the Society

"W. F. Lincoln Clerk  
"S. H. Gould Moderator"

"Chose Solomon Freeman, Tully Crosby and S. H. Gould Parish Committee for the ensuing year"

\* \* \*

"Whereupon the Society, then convened immediately appointed an able committee of the church and society to investigate the case and act accordingly. That Committee forthwith attended to the duty assigned them and now verbally report, that on the examination of two boys (and they have good reason to think there are others) they were entirely confirmed and unanimous in the opinion of his being guilty to the full extent of the above specified charges.

"Whereupon the committee sent for Alger and to him specified the charges and evidence of his guilt, which he neither denied or attempted to extenuate but received it with the apparent calmness of an old offender, — and hastily left town in the very next train for parts unknown—probably Boston.

"No further comment is necessary, you know the penalty attached to such unnatural crime by human as well as divine ears. Please take such action as will prevent his imposing on others and



Wall Street, New York  
Gillender Building



Above, Dick Seddon (left) and Morris Olsen prowl through the thousands of books that are literally crammed into Morris' spacious basement in his Mattapan, Massachusetts home. Morris' interest in Alger is well known throughout New England. Below is HAS President Jerry Friedland's study, with his hundreds of Alger and other boys' books lining the walls. (All the pictures in this issue of Newsboy were taken by Jerry).





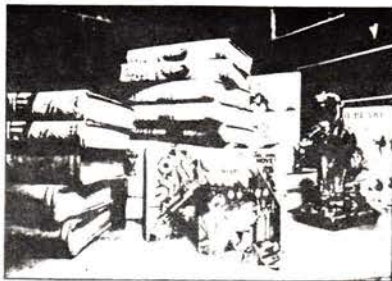
# Celebrity Collector

## Carolyn Keene, a.k.a. Harriet S. Adams

9

The creator of *Nancy Drew* is still adding to an already huge collection of juvenile adventure books.

by Ralph Gardner



Above: A few of the titles that made Edward Stratemeyer and his publishing syndicate famous.

Right: Harriet S. Adams — known to thousands as Carolyn Keene — and her associate, Nancy Alexrad (right), pose in Harriet's office, amid old photos, illustrations, books and mementoes. The photo on the desk, at far right, is Harriet's father Edward Stratemeyer.



Photographs by Greg Edwards

Carolyn Keene — creator of *Nancy Drew*, perennially teenaged heroine of the bestselling mystery series for girls — is an active, youthful, intensely inquisitive great-grandmother whose real name is Harriet S. Adams. She presides over what has got to be one of the most extensive collections of adventure books for young readers.

"Actually, it's several collections," Mrs. Adams explains, "when you include a set I presented to Wellesley College — I was in the Class of '14 — and those being assembled for my children."

Harriet Adams' middle initial stands for Stratemeyer — her maiden name — and as *Nancy Drew* might say, therein lies the clue to this vast assemblage dating from the 1890s to the present day. Every volume is a product of the pen or the incredible fiction factory founded by her late father, Edward Stratemeyer.

Although he composed numerous novels under his own byline, he was better known as Arthur M. Winfield (*Rover Boys*); Victor Appleton (*Tom Swift*); A. Len Chapman (*Radio Boys*); Franklin W. Dixon (*Hardy Boys*); James Cody Ferris (*X Bar X Boys*); Laura Lee Hope (*Bobbsey Twins*); Margaret Penrose (*Motor Girls*); Roy Rockwood (*Bomba the Jungle Boy*), as well as such noms de plume as Frank V. Webster, Clarence Young and Capt. Ralph Bonehill.

By 1906 these works were in such demand that he established the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Outlining action and characters, he hired a small army of free-

lancers — mostly newspapermen who could swiftly turn out exciting, fast-paced prose — to flesh out narratives.

At his death in 1930, the organization had produced 100,000,000 copies of more than 800 titles written under 65 names. His daughter, who until then concentrated upon community service and raising a family, inherited the syndicate. She continued some series, eliminated those in which interest waned and originated new ones. She also began writing *Honey Bunch*, *Tom Swift Jr.*, *Hardy Boys*, *Happy Hollisters* and others.

In her father's files she found three drafts for the exploits of a young girl detective to be called *Nancy Drew*. Their author would be Carolyn Keene. Mrs. Adams wrote these and, in years that followed, raised their total to 56 volumes. Four *Nancy Drew* movies, starring Bonita Granville, were released by Warner Brothers during the 1930s, and the perils of *Nancy Drew* as well as Frank and Joe Hardy are currently featured on prime time TV.

Since 1934, three dozen *Dana Girls* stories also were written by Harriet Adams under her Carolyn Keene pen-name. To date she has turned out 170 cliff-hangers, adding to the list at the rate of two each year.

During the years she has directed the syndicate, 150,000,000 additional copies of hundreds of existing and new thrillers have been printed. Titles total about 1,500 and these — mostly in fine condi-

tion — are arrayed on shelves of the library at her two-story gray brick headquarters in Maplewood, N.J. Here some 12,000 volumes — many in a variety of editions — are stacked, earlier issues in original dust jackets. There is reference material, Stratemeyer's correspondence with writers (some of whom achieved literary prominence in their own right), photos, scrapbooks and much that has been written about this unique group. There are manuscripts, galley proofs and librettos Stratemeyer wrote for two comic operas. Titled *Love's Maze* and *The Perfume Prince*, they were published but it isn't known if they were ever performed.

On walls and along corridors hang artwork by A.B. Shute, Charles Nuttal and other illustrators of the early 1900s. These include two dozen oils as well as wash drawings, most of them used as frontispieces.

In Harriet Adams comfortably home-like office are more books, family photographs and colorful paintings made for covers of more recent titles. She also displays dolls in costumes of many nations and souvenirs of frequent travels in search of new material.

At Mrs. Adams' nearby home is her father's personal book collection, placed alongside those she has written. These include titles translated into a dozen languages for distribution in fifty countries, plus a tremendous mass of source material ranging from police procedure manuals to cookbooks and scientific

publications.

One of her syndicate partners, Nancy Axelrad — who as Laura Lee Hope III now writes the long-popular *Bobbsey Twins Series* — comments: "Mrs. Adams has become an expert on detection methods, fingerprinting, interrogating suspects, handwriting analysis and other investigative techniques.

"Her own reading is mainly of source

material that often emerges as a vital chapter in a Drew mystery. She has a natural curiosity and develops wonderful ideas from everyday news items. She's always looking for offbeat events and out-of-the-way locations for new settings. Her knack of figuring out how things tick makes her ideal for this type of writing."

"After I've developed my idea," Mrs. Adams adds, "I draft a precis which is discussed by all our partners. If foreign locales are involved, I go there. Nancy Drew's cases took me to Peru for *Clue in the Crossword Cipher*, Turkey for *Mysterious Mannequin*, Africa for *Spider Saphire Mystery*, France for *Mystery of the 99 Steps*, to Scotland, Hong Kong and other places."

Most trips also provide *Dana Girls* backgrounds, and Miss Axelrad, who sometimes accompanies her, returns with scenes and situations for *Bobbsey Twins* plots.

At home or office, Harriet Adams spends several hours each day dictating into a machine. While relaxing, she replies to some of the several hundred fan letters she receives each month.

"Most are requests from my 8-to-13 year-old readers for autographs, pictures or inquiries about stories," Mrs. Adams

says. "Of course, every letter is answered."

As vast as her still growing collection is, there remain gaps in various series, for which she is constantly searching. Among her most successful hunters of missing items is Edward LeBlanc, a knowledgeable, enthusiastic bookman of Fall River, Mass. Although some rarities are worth up to \$50, most of those still needed are in the \$3-to-\$15 range. Occasionally she must buy a complete series to get the elusive one.

Among the scarcest are eleven books that Horatio Alger, the famed author of rags-to-riches tales, had in various stages of production when he died in 1899. Stratemeyer — who had been Alger's friend and editor — acquired these manuscripts and provided the finishing touches. He listed Alger as the author, indicating on title pages that they were "completed by Arthur M. Winfield".

"Fortunately," Harriet Adams says, "lots of *Motor Cycle Chums*, *Moving Picture Girls*, *Dave Fearless* and others we need are still around. Eventually they'll all be found."

A list of these wanted titles is available upon request from the Stratemeyer Syndicate, 197 Maplewood Ave., Maplewood, N.J., 07040.



Harriet Adams' collection includes many original illustrations, like these three, for dust jackets and covers of Stratemeyer Syndicate books.

This article by HAS member Ralph Gardner is reprinted by permission of Acquire Publishing Company, Inc. 170 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.

## NEWSBOY BOOK REVIEW

by Gary Scharnhorst

Alger: A Biography Without a Hero.

By Herbert R. Mayes. Des Plaines, Ill.: Gilbert K. Westgard II, 1978. Introduction by the author. Afterword by Jack Bales. 245 pages.

The new edition of Herbert R. Mayes's Alger: A Biography Without a Hero, originally issued in 1928 and now re-issued by HAS member Gilbert K. Westgard II, belongs in every major library. Mayes's introduction to this golden anniversary edition alone is worth the price, for in it he carefully explodes the myth that any Alger biography yet published is reliable. As only Mayes could have done, he traces the recurrent appearance of "facts" he invented for that "maudlin mishmash" (p. viii) in encyclopedias and, worse yet, other biographies which solemnly repeat his fabrications as though they were documented data. For example, Mayes readily admits that he made up such standard features of the Alger vita as the nickname "Holy Horatio" and the stammer with which Alger supposedly was afflicted throughout his life. Any subsequent biographer who asserts the accuracy of such minutiae both misleads his readers and violates the principles of his historical enterprise—and, as one who devotes a fair amount of his time to such ideas, I applaud Mayes's claims.

Perhaps more than any other American writer except Edgar Allan Poe, Alger has been misrepresented by those who would serve his memory—his biographers. The original biographer, who had unwittingly established a precedent, long abused, of inventing "facts" and their documentation, quite deliberately now clears the air so that the serious task of writing a fair, accurate, and reliable, perhaps even definitive biography of Alger may begin.

If Mayes's new introduction alone is worth the price consider the luxuries of this edition: Jack Bales's afterword, which illustrates how prevalent Mayes's version of Alger's life remains after a

half-century; the text of the original biography, which even now may be read as a delightful work of the imagination, especially in light of its influence on scholars and critics who should have known better; and a beautiful and rugged binding. When you next meet or write the three gentlemen responsible for this book, congratulate them.

(Editor's note: Write Gil Westgard for copies of this book. His address is 9226 W. Golf Rd., Des Plaines, Ill., 60016).

\* \* \*



1980 CONVENTION NEWS  
by Brad Chase

Welcome to the land of the whale, the robin and mountain laurel. Welcome to the home of Nathan Hale, Mark Twain, P. T. Barnum and nuclear electric generating plants. Welcome to New England and specifically to Connecticut where next May 1-4 we'll be your hosts for the annual convention of the Horatio Alger Society. It'll be called the Connecticut Conclave.

Ann and I are starting to plan activities and make arrangements. So far we've talked with many motel and hotel people. Several have expressed interest in accomodating us but their rates just seem too high. Bustling East coast activity, inflation plus a bonus for access to the airport pushes the price per room sky high.

However, after much hand wringing and deliberation we've settled on a place—a nice place, snuggled in the heart of the Connecticut valley between Hartford and Bradley International Airport right on Interstate 91 and about 15 miles from our home. It's called the Tobacco Valley Inn, a smaller Sheraton Motel with 113 rooms divided between three

separate buildings.

Of particular importance, I think, is the enthusiasm that the sales manager has shown in meeting our needs. We are hoping to make arrangements so that all HAS attendees are located in the same building along with our usual Hospital-ity Room. We're making final arrangements for members to reserve rooms and you'll be hearing more in subsequent Newsboys. Rooms will cost \$28 for singles and \$34 for doubles which to my amazement is low compared to many of the other rates we've been quoted.

We are planning to have the usual scheduled activities that we all look forward to each year. For example, the book sale, the annual meeting and the banquet/auction. Of course, Ann and I are eagerly looking forward to having an open house at our home for all arrivals Thursday evening. This reminds me that I'm going to have to get my collection in shape in order for it to stand inspection by those who visit with us.

Free time during the convention of course will be up to you. We have a variety of things to do and see here in this part of the world and especially within striking distance of the Convention site. For example, within an hour or so (driving distance) there are two outstanding museum-village restoration areas: Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts and Mystic Seaport Maritime Village located down along the Connecticut shoreline. Both will cost you in time and dollars but if restored villages are your thing, then we have a couple that are worth your while.

Old bookstores, museums of all types, flea markets and all the rest will be here for you to enjoy during your stay in between scheduled events and book haggles. In the next few issues of Newsboy I'll be sharing with you this and that about Convention activities and things to do and see while you're here. In the meantime, put a big red circle around the first week in May, 1980, and plan to come and share your Alger interest with us.

#### MINI CONVENTION HELD IN EAST by Dick Seddon

It appears that our President, Jerry Friedland, is establishing a new and very pleasant custom, at least for those of us who live in the East and can participate. Jerry, upon learning that Secretary Carl Hartmann and his lovely wife Jean would be in New England visiting their son arranged for another of his famous mini conventions for the weekend of September 29 and 30.

On Friday evening Jerry, his wife Elaine and son Jonathan, Bill Leitner and wife Judy and Brad Alexander, all from New York State, and Jim Thorp and wife Mary Jane and Dick Seddon from Massachusetts met at the Sheraton Inn at Boxborough, Massachusetts for dinner and a social evening.

The next morning Carl and Jean arrived and after a lengthy breakfast the entire party left for Morris Olsen's. Elaine and Judy, not being collectors, elected to go shopping at the Chestnut Hill Bloomingdales' so we dropped them off enroute to be picked up later.

Upon arriving at Morris' home we were welcomed by him and his gracious daughter Beverly and by Brad Chase, our Vice-President who had arrived from Connecticut earlier that morning.

Several delightful hours were spent in looking over Morris's several hundred Alger volumes and persuading Morris to part with this or that item that one just couldn't leave without owning. Morris managed to make everyone happy by letting each one have some treasures. Even lunch was forgotten for hours until everyone was famished at which time Morris led us all to his favorite sea food restaurant, the famous Legal Sea Food. We found Elaine and Judy waiting for us and Brad Alexander hosted the entire party to a delicious banquet. When all appetites were satisfied we returned to the Motel where champagne was served and the mini convention was declared a success.

\* \* \*

## By Horatio Alger Society —

# Seminar Paper Published

Indiana University of Pennsylvania graduate Douglas G. Tarr of Pottsville recently had published, by the Horatio Alger Society, the first installment of a seminar paper he authored.

Tarr, who received his master of arts degree from IUP in August 1976, had his work appear in the April issue of "Newsboy," the monthly pub-

lication of the Horatio Alger Society.

The paper, titled "Italian Child Slavery and the Padrone System," was written under the direction of IUP history professor Dr. Clyde C. Gelbach in a seminar covering "Horatio Alger and His World" at IUP. It was described as "an informative and smooth flowing history of the padrone system

..." by Jack Bales, editor of "Newsboy." Further installments of Tarr's paper will appear in subsequent issues.

To call attention to both the publication of Tarr's article

and to Gelbach's offering of a repeat graduate seminar on Alger at IUP during 1979's main summer session, the history department has had on display

in Keith Hall for the month of

(Pennsylvania)

Indiana Evening Gazette, Thursday, May 24, 1979.—29

May a collection of memorabilia pertaining to Alger and his world.

The material for the Alger display is owned by Gelbach, a member of the society. Included will be copies of some of Alger's works, clippings of articles about Alger and several biographies of Alger.

Tarr is currently a claims representative for the Social Security Administration in Pottsville.



(Above) The conclusion of this paper will be presented in next month's Newsboy.

(Right) "The King and his books." Morris Olsen, probably the best known Alger collector in the East, relaxes amidst his hobby. See you in Connecticut for the convention, Morris?

## SALLY SPARKS, SPINSTER.

BY CAROLINE F. PRESTON.

JUST to ease my bursting heart, I am going to write out an account of my last disappointment. It is meant only for my own perusal. If I thought any body else would ever see it I should certainly faint away on the spot.

In the first place, I will set down here what I wouldn't breathe to any living being—I am forty-one years old this spring; and yet I have never quite succeeded in securing a partner to walk with me the thorny paths of existence, as somebody has very poetically and feelingly remarked. If I'd only known at sixteen what awaited me, I really believe I should have given up. Sixteen! only think, that was twenty five years ago—though I give out to the public that I'm most thirty—but I'm afraid there are some of them that don't believe it.

However, I don't intend to give an account of all my past life. I'm only going to set down the particulars of my last summer's disappointment. It was just about the first of June, that the thought popped into my head, what a good idea it would be to go to the country to board. I'd pretty much given up the prospect of finding a husband in Millville, for the fact is, them factory girls—impudent, brazen hussies as they are—monopolize the attentions of all the men, so that those who are delicate and refined, like myself, don't stand any chance, because they won't stoop to use the same arts they do. Bless me what a long sentence. However, as no eye but my own is ever to read it, it don't make so much difference.

Well, as I was saying, I concluded to go to some country town to spend the summer, hoping that, by passing myself off for a rich heiress, or fashionable belle I might be able to catch a beau.

So I begin to look over the advertisements of country board, and at length came to the conclusion to go to Huckleberry Corner, in New Hampshire, where all the people that ain't farmers are agriculturists.

I provided myself with as many fine dresses as I could afford, for you know, I wanted people to think that I was wealthy. I found it so expensive that, before I got through, I found myself obliged to sell the half-acre of land that Grandfather Sparks left me in his will. But then I thought how much more valuable a husband would be than a half-acre of land. So I submitted to the sacrifice with Christian fortitude and resignation, feeling pretty confident that my reward would come, sooner or later.

It wasn't till about the last moment, that the most brilliant idea of all came to me. It was this—I would pass myself off for a southern widow, with a great cotton plantation. I felt pretty sure the men would nibble at that bait. Of course there wouldn't be nobody in Huckleberry Corner that would know me, so I could get along well enough.

I didn't quite know what state would be the best for me to hail from, but I finally concluded that Alabama would be as good as any. So I decided on that. I likewise concluded to change my name so as to avoid suspicion, and I went down to the

city on purpose to have some cards struck off with my new name. They looked like this:

MRS. COLONEL SPARKINGTON.

SPARKSVILLE,

Alabama.

I thought Sparkington sounded sort of aristocratic, and as I didn't know the name of any places in Alabama, I thought I would put Sparksville, as that would give people an idea that my husband had been a man of some importance, to have the whole town named after him.

Well, everything being arranged, I left Millville without letting anybody know where I was going. Indeed I hinted round that I didn't know but I should visit some of my relations in Boston, which wasn't a falsehood, because I do expect to, sometime, if I live long enough.

On the morning of the second day, I found myself on board the stage that went to Huckleberry Corner.

There wasn't but one other passenger in the stage but myself. He was a tall man with elegant black whiskers, and looked as if he might be about thirty years old. I was immediately struck by his appearance, and considered how I might draw his attention to me, for thus far he hadn't taken any more notice of me than if I had been a cat. After a little reflection I thought I would slip one of my cards out of my pocket, and contrive to drop it accidentally at his feet, so that he couldn't help stooping to pick it up, when of course he would see the name, and think more of me in consequence.

So I just took the opportunity when he was looking out of the window at the scenery, and slyly dropped the card just at his feet. So I coughed slightly, and remarked in what I considered to be an aristocratic tone:

"Would you be kind enough to hand me the card which I accidentally let fall?"

"Certainly, ma'am," said he indifferently, stooping to pick it up. But when he saw the name, he said in a more interested tone, "I perceive that you are a southern lady."

I bowed.

"Would you allow me," he continued, "to retain this card and give you one of my own in exchange?"

"I should be pleased to have you do so," said I, quite delighted at his desire to make my acquaintance.

He handed me a card on which was inscribed the name of Erastus Lyon, M. D.

"Are you indeed a physician?" said I, enthusiastically. "It is a profession that I venerate. It is the mission of the physician to go about relieving pain and sickness, and although my own health has been remarkably good, I value the profession none the less. Let me see, I haven't been sick for twenty years, and as that was when I was a mere child, under ten, I don't remember much about it."

I said this so that he might make a calculation about my age, and think me under thirty. He looked a little surprised, I thought, and pretty soon he said:

This Alger short story - written by Horatio's sister under the above pseudonym - is from the collection of HAS member Morris Olsen. It originally appeared in the February, 1883 issue of Gleason's Monthly Companion. Thanks go to Morris for letting me print it here for the benefit of all in the Alger Society.

"Have you ever been north before?"

"Yes," said I. "In fact I feel pretty well acquainted with you northerners."

"And how do you like us, may I venture to ask?"

"Very much indeed. In fact I may say that I feel quite as much at home among you as at the south. Since the death of my husband, Colonel Sparkington, I have passed all my summers at the north."

I might have said that I had passed all my springs, falls and winters also, but I thought it wasn't necessary to tell the whole truth.

"May I inquire," said Dr. Lyon, "whether you intended to stop any length of time at Huckleberry Corner?"

"I am thinking of passing the summer there if I like the place and meet agreeable people."

"You have never been there before?"

"No, and I know no one there."

"Indeed," said Dr. Lyon thoughtfully. After a moment's pause he added, "If our brief acquaintance will justify the offer, I will suggest that the place at which I myself have engaged board is an excellent one, and very pleasantly situated."

"Indeed, sir," said I, considerably more pleased than I was willing to show, "I shall be very much obliged to you if you will take that trouble."

When we reached Huckleberry Corner, I stopped at the stage office while Dr. Lyon went over to engage board for me. He came back in about half an hour, saying it was all arranged and I could go right over.

Half an hour afterwards I found myself settled in a very comfortable room at the house of Mr. Ezekiel Preston. He didn't take but two boarders, Dr. Lyon and myself. I wanted awfully to know how much board I was expected to pay, but I didn't dare to ask, as I wanted to pass for a rich southern widow, to whom money was of no consequence. The next day Dr. Lyon happened to mention it to me, of his own accord, that they charged seven dollars a week. It almost made me jump when I heard it, for I had calculated on not having more than half that to pay, and I felt sure that they piled on the price because they thought I was rich. However when he told me I only said very coolly: "O,

very well. Quite reasonable I think." I know that remark made quite an impression on him, for after that he became quite attentive to me. So three weeks passed away. Every day regular we used to walk out together, and I know the people of Huckleberry Corner had a good deal to say about the rich southern lady that boarded at Mr. Preston's.

At length the expected declaration came. Dr. Lyon told me that ever since he had seen me he had been powerfully attracted by my beauty and attractions, and entreated me to accept him. I told him it was very unexpected, and I didn't know as it would be right to the memory of Colonel Sparkington to marry again, but if he thought it would be right I would make no objection, as I felt to deplore my unprotected situation. I confessed with blushes that I had never met a man whom I thought so worthy to fill the place of the dear departed, and insinuated that he bore a very strong resemblance to the colonel.

Dr. Lyon answered that in that case a second marriage might be considered a compliment to my late husband, and intimated that a refusal might have the effect of driving him to suicide. Well, the upshot of it was, that we agreed to be married in a week, by the minister of Huckleberry Corner. Dr. Lyon said he would invite a lady cousin to be present, and stand up with me, as I couldn't be expected to have many lady friends at the north. Little did I anticipate who that female friend was. Two days before the ceremony she came, and to my horror I recognized her as my old enemy, Clarissa Higgins of Millville.

"Mrs. Colonel Sparkington, of Alabama!" said she in her shrill voice, when we were introduced. "Why this is the old maid Sally Sparks, that has lived all her life in Millville."

"Good Heavens! is this indeed so?" asked Dr. Lyon, looking from her to me.

As for me I fainted away in mortification, and when I came to I was told that my husband that was to be had left town, and the marriage was indefinitely postponed. I used up my last cent in paying my board bill and stage fare, and here I am a home again, a penniless and forlorn spinster—no longer Mrs. Colonel Sparkington, of Alabama, but Miss Sally Sparks, of Millville.

#### RANDOM REPORTS FROM ALGERLAND by Jack Bales

I visited Gary Scharnhorst and his wife Sandy last month (chalk up another "mini convention")!! They live near Dallas, Texas, and we met for a weekend at the home of Gary's parents in Stockton, Missouri. Gary and I discussed Alger for quite a few hours, and we compared notes on the project with which we are both involved. It was an exceedingly pleasant weekend, topped off with several great meals prepared by Gary's mother.

Ralph Gardner reports that his book interview program, "Ralph Gardner's Bookshelf," is now a one hour Sunday evening feature on WVNJ Radio in New

York. His current guest schedule of fiction and nonfiction authors include Anne Jackson, Louis Nizer, Isaac Asimov and Allen Ginsberg.

Dick Bowerman recently had an article printed in the Journal of American Culture. The Spring, 1979 issue was devoted to a "Focus on the Self-Made American," and Dick's article was a thought provoking piece entitled, "Horatio Alger, Jr.; or, Adrift in the Myth of Rags to Riches." Other works on Alger were also included in the special issue of JAC.

HAS member Clyde Gelbach (see p. 13 of this issue) sent me a photograph of the Alger display that he arranged. I hope to have it in the next Newsboy.



. . . The lecture concluded at half-past nine, and [Richard Hunter and Henry Fosdick] took the ten o'clock boat over the Fulton ferry.

They seated themselves in the first cabin, towards the Brooklyn side, . . . "Look there, Fosdick," said Richard Hunter. "See that poor little chap asleep in the corner. Doesn't it remind you of the times we used to have, when we were as badly off as he?"

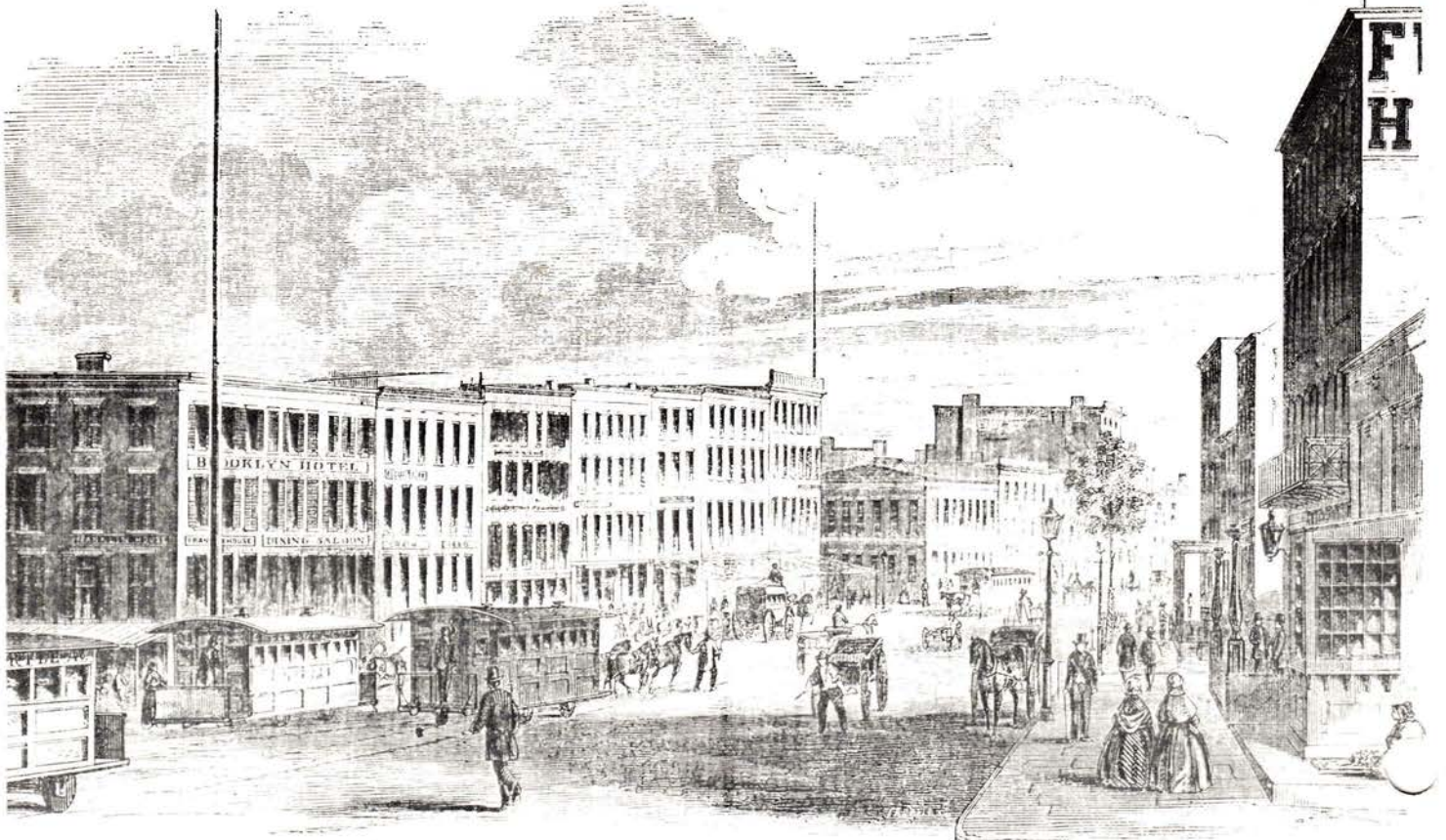
"Yes, Dick, but I don't think I ever slept on a ferry-boat."

"That's because you were not on the streets long. I took care of myself eight years, and more than once took a cheap bed for two cents on a boat like this. Most likely I've slept in that very corner."

"It was a hard life, Dick."

"Yes, and a hard bed too; but there's a good many that are no better off now."

—Horatio Alger, Jr., Mark, the Match Boy, Chapter VIII.



DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN IN THE LATE 1860's. A view of Fulton Street, as seen from the ferry landing.