



**THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY**  
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
**NEWSBOY**



*Horatio Alger, Jr.*

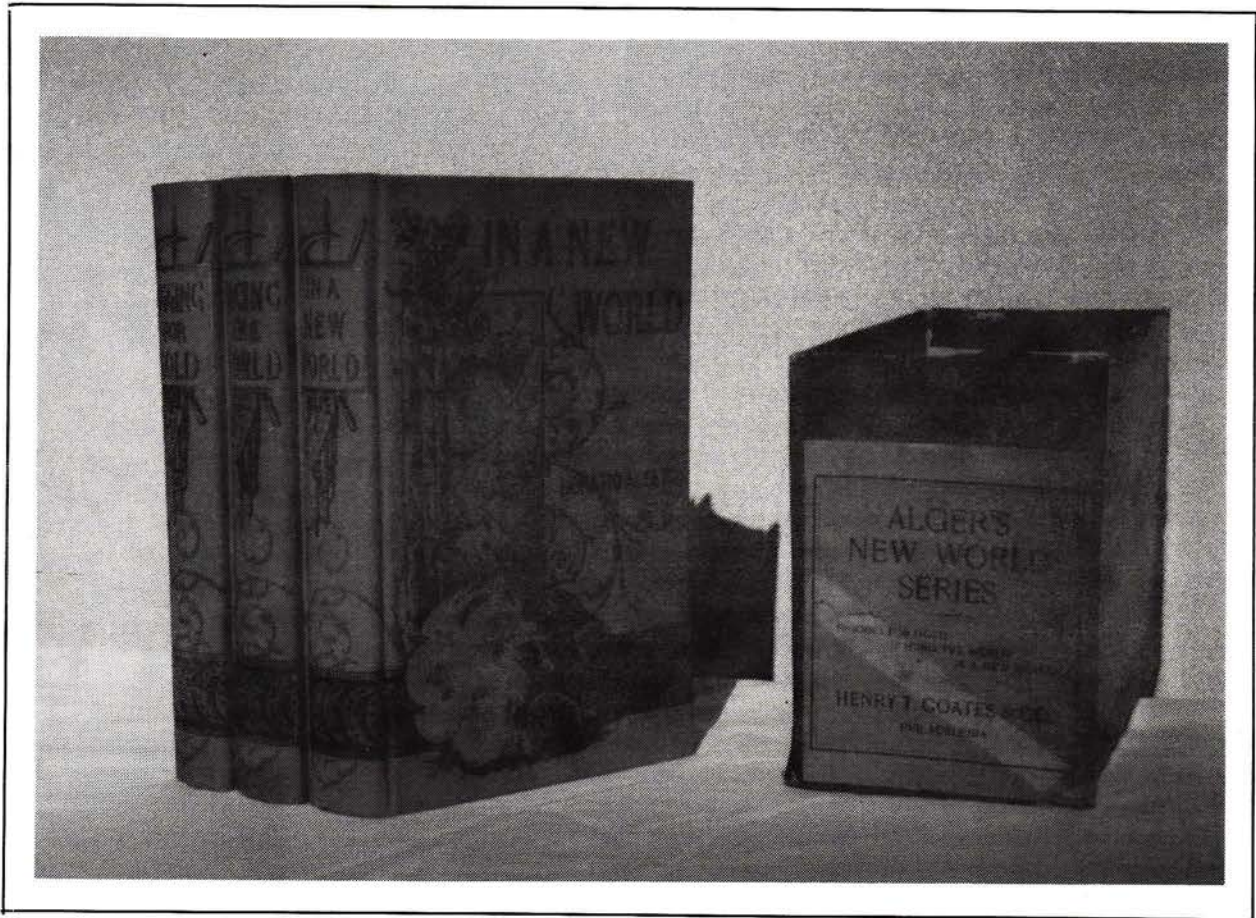
1832 - 1899

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

Volume XXVII

MARCH-APRIL, 1989

NUMBER 5



Collector and Partic'lar Friend Bill Russell has recently acquired a boxed set of Henry T. Coates & Company titles from the New World Series. The set was purchased from a dealer located just one block from the former Coates headquarters on 12th and Chestnut Street in Philadelphia.



March 10, 1989

Dear Jim,

I just read your second issue of NEWSBOY. It's a wonderful issue, and I eagerly read it from cover to cover. We all like to read letters to the editor, reports of what members are doing, and it's great that you are featuring these things. I urge all members to "get behind you" and bombard you with things to print.

Long-time members who remember Ken Butler, HAS co-founder, will be interested to hear the following news. I recently wrote Ken a letter, and received one back from his wife telling me that Ken is in a nursing home in his home town of Mendota, Illinois. Doris Butler notes that "his failing mental health as well as physical infirmities made it impossible to be cared for in our home." Doris also stated that Ken "was always proud of his part in organizing the Alger Society." Yes, he was, and a few of my reminiscences about Ken will be found in my regular column for your next issue.

Cordially,

\* \* \* \* \*  
Jack Bales

Dear Jim,

Jerry Friedland suggested that you might be interested in seeing our newsletter. He tells me you're editor of the Alger Society's NEWSBOY and helped to organize a convention.

The Phantom Friends are a group of girls' series book collectors. Attached is our monthly WHISPERED WATCHWORD (one year's subscription is \$20.00). We have an annual convention and are looking at Houston for a future gathering (way in the future, 1993; we've got other sites picked for intervening years). I don't know if you are personally interested in girls' books; however, I thought you'd like the opportunity to see another book society's newsletter.

Best wishes,

\* Kate Emburg

Editor: Thanks, Kate, I do enjoy collecting some of the girls' series books. For anyone else who is interested, the address is  
Society of Phantom Friends  
Kate Emburg, President  
4100 Cornelia Way  
N. Highlands, CA 95660  
(\$20 for 1 year)  
\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim, (why be formal?)

CONGRATULATIONS are certainly in order! I just received my NEWSBOY today and will not rest until I can get words of cheer and encouragement off to you...I let my subscription to NEWSBOY lapse, but Gil Westgard talked me into subscribing again, which, of course, now I'm glad I did...In the past I have had no particular urge to attend any of the Alger conventions, but I must admit that the "times they are a-changin'." However, I will be in St. Louis in early April for the Popular Culture Convention and feel I can not attend both. I will be joining Eddie LeBlanc, Jack Dizer, Deidre Johnson and Randy Cox among others, but I will certainly miss not seeing Owen Cobb, Paul Miller, and Jerry Friedland again, all of whom I met only once at the Corning Convention in 1986. I feel now that I have known them all my life.

Next year I understand that the Algerines will be convening in Catskill, NY, if memory serves me right, and so since it's practically in my back yard, I hope to attend. Maybe I can even convince my brother to join me, since he did get me "Malcolm the Waterboy" as the PIÈCE DE RESISTANCE for Christmas and many other choice Alger books.

Please extend all my best to those Alger fans at the next convention, and especially to Paul and Jerry, and of course to Wallace Palmer if he makes it.... Since 1964 when I purchased Ralph Gardner's book, I have always wanted to meet the author, and so in 1990, I guess I'd better tool over in my Toyota and DO IT!!!!



Again, Jim, kudos to you and keep up the fine good work you are doing. You've brought us all back into the fold again.

Yours most cordially,

Peter Walther

Editor: Thanks, Peter. I look forward to meeting you about a year from now.

\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim-

Perhaps you can use this reproduction of an old postcard.

It shows the Fiske House at Old Orchard, Maine, where Horatio frequently stayed in August with his sister, Olive Augusta and her husband, Amos Cheney. (Why, here comes Horatio, now, walking along the beach!)

The place eventually burned down as did most of those old Victorian wooden hotels. Back in the '30's I spent a night at one of those rambling hotels (at Old Orchard). I can't remember which.

Some years back, I wrote a magazine piece about the old Fiske House, in which Horatio is mentioned.

Cordially,

Ralph Gardner

\* \* \* \*

I N A N E W W O R L D - -

Laura Kathryn Bales, born to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bales, March 14 at :17 a.m., weighing 8 pounds, 11 ounces. She joins her brother, Patrick Michael, now 22 months old.

Kathryn Suzanne, born to Mr. and Mrs. Don Stephens, January 31, weighing 9 pounds, 10 ounces.

Dear James Ryberg:

I just got the Jan-Feb '89 issue of NEWSBOY yesterday and have read it cover to cover.

I like the looks of the NEWSBOY already, and the content has to do with members and not some unknown authors. I've been in the Society since its inception, and belonged to the one in Quakers-town, Penn., before Campbell started his--at which time the Penn-man got sick and offered his membership to Campbell, back in early 60's--nickin' 30 years ago. I helped Campbell with the 2-page legal sized 2-sides as Associate Editor, and earned the sobriquet numbered PFA-01--we typed the stencils and he ran them off on a mimeograph, I think, in Campbell's church in Kalamazoo, Mich. My column was called THE ALGER FOXHOLE. So many



On the Beach, Old Orchard, Me.

Published in Germany for G. W. Morris, Portland, Maine.



of the old timers are gone, the Goldbergs, Ida and Max; they were a jolly pair; Dick Seddon, the magician; Ernie Sanford; Stanley Pachon with whom I corresponded and did much research for over 20 years; Forest Campbell; Paul House....so the NEWSBOY IS IN GOOD HANDS....the Jan-Feb issue cover even looks like old home week!

CONGRATULATIONS, well done, carry on....Most cordially,

Irene Gurman  
PF-A-01

Editor: Thanks so much, Irene, for sharing moments of the early days of The Horatio Alger Society. Like so many of the readers, we can learn about the beginnings of the Society only from the experts like you.

\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim,

Enclosed you'll find a short news story on Horatio Alger which appeared in the Middlesex News of Framingham, Mass. and surrounding towns. Hope you enjoy it! I found it interesting as I live in the area and I have a piece of the Elliot Oak tree. The wood is shaped like an ash tray in a horse's hoof design. It was given to me by my grandfather from the town of Natick. My grandfather was named George C. Fairbanks. He also gave me a first edition Alger title called The Young Salesman which was signed by Horatio Alger, Jr. to my grandfather in 1896. I'm real proud to own it now.

Although we have not met, I look forward to doing so some day at one of the Alger Conventions in the near future. Also, you are doing a fine job as editor of NEWSBOY as I have just finished reading it again.

I'll close for now and hope you enjoy this article on Alger and if I can be of some help with Alger material which I have, I'll gladly do so.

Until another time,  
Warmest regards,

Donald Choate, PF 608

Editor: Donald, thanks for the clipping and kind words. I'll be calling on you for some help soon. In fact, if you send me the address of the newspaper, I'll secure permission to run the article in a future issue of NEWSBOY. The article does note that the Eliot Oak in South Natick is now gone, but under that oak, Rev. Eliot presented a group of Indians with a copy of the Bible which he translated for them. Also, the article continues, "The Historical Society was founded in 1870 with the Rev. Horatio Alger, author of the famous "rags to riches" stories as its president."

\* \* \* \*

Dear Carl,

Enclosed is my check for continuing my membership in HAS. The NEWSBOY'S arrival in the mail is always a welcome respite from the pressures and routines. You know, there's nothing like picking up an Alger and just getting lost in another time, another way of life.

Oh, this stationery. I know you're asking yourself about this stationery. (Ed. Madison Square Garden Network letterhead) Have I left teaching to pursue my true profession at Madison Square Garden as the goalie for the New York Rangers or as the great middleweight fighter I was destined to be?

No, I'm still a threadbare professor at Dutchess Community College (SUNY), but I was on sabbatical leave from teaching last fall. It was wonderful to get away from the college routine for a while. I spent my leave by studying current techniques in television production at Madison Square Garden TV Sports Network. One of my former students is a producer for MSG-TV and I was working with him. It was very interesting. MSG-TV does the video for hockey, boxing, wrestling, basketball, tennis.... Now you can see why I look forward to the warmth and wonder of the articles in the NEWSBOY. Yr' Paric'lar Friend  
Stephen Press



NEWSBOY Book Review

by Jack Bales

Writers Talk to Ralph D. Gardner, by  
Ralph D. Gardner. Scarecrow  
Press, Inc., P.O. Box 4167,  
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840.  
355 pp. \$35.00.  
ISBN 0-8108-2143-5

Those HAS members who know Ralph Gardner from his attendance at conventions probably recall a genial, pipe-smoking man, casually dressed, at ease with all HAS members and eager to promote our Society (one of his books on Alger was dedicated "To My Partic'lar Friends of the Horatio Alger Society").

But there's another side of Ralph. In addition to his several Alger books, Ralph's literary endeavors have included an author interview radio show called "Ralph Gardner's Bookshelf," which he hosted for over 12 years. Beginning in 1974, Ralph talked with over 1,000 authors on his radio show. Many of these writers were--and are--Ralph's personal friends, and in the conversations they discussed their books, literary working habits, and offered advice on how to get one's work published.

Now, twenty-three of some of Ralph's more interesting interviews have been collected in a book entitled WRITERS TALK TO RALPH D. GARDNER. Some of the authors in the book include Isaac Asimov (who has written over 350 books), Allen Ginsberg, Evan Hunter (of The Blackboard Jungle) and the 87th Precinct mystery stories), Gay Talese, John Toland, Erica Jong (remember Fear of Flying?), Susan Sontag, Elizabeth Hardwick and Rod McKuen (past winner of the Horatio Alger Award and author of the introduction to Ralph's book).

Along with each author interview is a photograph of the writer and a thoughtful introduction of him/her, written especially for the book by Ralph. Ralph begins his introduction for Allen Ginsberg with these words, "If Horatio Alger had written the adventure of Allen Ginsberg's rise to success, he might have entitled it From Coffee House Poet to Distinguished Professor."

What really sets this book apart from other volumes of author interviews and commentaries is that it is evident that Ralph has read the books which he is discussing--you'd be surprised at how many interviewers and reviewers don't. Not only does Ralph comment on the author's literary style, form, and characters, but he brings up statements that other reviewers have made. Also, I know that I, when reading interviews, occasionally think to myself, "Now that was one stupid question. Can't the person think of something better to ask?" Well, you won't have that sensation while reading Ralph's book. Here is one of my favorite paragraphs, in the interview with Kurt Vonnegut (Vonnegut's comments on censorship--both of his works and others--in this interview make for compelling reading). Ralph says to Vonnegut:

"Recently The New York Times conducted a survey the results of which indicated that the average writer earned less than five thousand dollars a year. I want to quote a few lines from a letter that you wrote on that subject: 'Almost nobody in this country can make a living as a writer. There may be about 300 of us who make a living at it. There are many more major league baseball players than that. The odds are terrible.' Why then do you suppose so many people put so much time and effort and hope into writing when most of these people could make considerably more money doing easier things?"

All I can add is that that is the type of question that I would want to ask and that I would want to hear answered.

Of course, the interviews besides dealing with the authors' personal lives, focus on their writing habits, and offer advice to fledgling authors on how to get published.



## Book Review Continued

It's a wonderful book, beautifully bound and printed by one of the best-known publishers of books for libraries. Buy a copy today and have Ralph autograph it for you.

One final note: Although Ralph's radio program is no longer on the air, he's still conducting author interviews and is writing book reviews, only this time it's on paper. His literary column is now syndicated by United Features Syndicate to some 100 newspapers. Ralph, as many HAS members know, used to work for The New York Times, then he got into advertising with his own agency, and now he's back with newspapers, his first--and best--love. As he told me in a recent phone conversation: "Newspaper work is the one thing I really like to do."

\* \* \* \*

## B O O K    M A R T

## FOR SALE-

JACK'S WARD, Loring (1875) with all points correct per Bennett's bibliography, spine ends somewhat worn, spine bit sprung, some soiling overall a near very good copy in the original cloth. \$80.00 postpaid  
Harland H. Eastman PF 128  
66 Main Street, PO Box 276  
Springvale, Maine 04083

## FOR SALE-

NEWSBOYS from Vol 1, #1 to date in about 9 books, 3/4 leatherbound \$500.00.

Jack Row PF 101  
4445 Vieux Carre  
Tampa, FA 33613

## FOR SALE-

JOE THE HOTEL BOY, 1st edition, all points Bennett, fair cond. exterior soiled, front free end paper missing. \$37.50.

Jim Ryberg, 930 Bayland, Houston, Texas 77009-6505.

NOTE: This issue will be mailed to you from Houston, Texas as the HAS shipping department, Executive Secretary, Carl Hartmann and family are on a cruise as this issue goes to press.

\* \* \* \*

## FROM OUR PAST--

Front page news from the NEWSBOY dated March, 1963 and numbered Volume 1, number 9 reveals....

Project No. 2. On the 10th of August, 1962 I opened an account in the name of RAGGED DICK in the INDUSTRIAL STATE BANK of Kalamazoo in the amount of \$1.00 (Suggested donation is \$1.00) The purpose of this fund is to aid or assist some deserving boy of the Hero type of our choice. In this regard, it came to our attention about two months ago that a disastrous fire in Philadelphia destroyed the homes of many families in the low rent and low income district. Altho our fund was small, Mrs. Smeltzer who lives in the suburban area was named to ascertain if such an eligible boy could be located. Mrs. Smeltzer accepted the responsibility but could not locate any one boy with which we might deal directly. We could have contributed to any number of local organizations who were familiar with the financial need. Donations which were sent to Mrs. Smeltzer have been deposited in the RAGGED DICK fund. The donations since last mention are as follows:

December 3, 1962 balance	\$7.00
Donation No. 7	1.00
Donation No. 8	1.00
Donation No. 9	1.00
Total	\$12.00

(The intentions of the society were noble even 26 years ago.)

THE 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. Founded by Forrest Campbell and Kenneth B. Butler. OFFICERS: President, Jim Ryberg; Vice-president, George Owens; Executive Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann; Treasurer, Alex T. Shaner; Directors, John Juvinal, Glenn Corcoran, Edward T. LeBlanc, Bob Sawyer, Owen Cobb, Bill McCord, Frank Jaques, Will Wright, Paul Miller; Directors Emeritus, Ralph D. Gardner, Bob Bennett, Max Goldberg. NEWSBOY, the Official Organ of The Horatio Alger Society, is published six times a year, and is indexed in the Modern Language Association's INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$15.00, with single issues costing \$3.00. Please make all your remittances payable to The Horatio Alger Society. Membership Applications, Renewals, Changes of Address and other correspondence should be sent to the Society's Executive Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Dr., Lansing, MI 48910. NEWSBOY ADVERTISING RATES: 1 page, \$32.00; half-page, \$17.00; quarter-page, \$9.00; column-inch, \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to The Horatio Alger Society, to Bob Sawyer, 4473 Janice Marie Blvd., Enchanted Acres, Columbus, OH 43207. THE LOST LIFE OF HORATIO ALGER, JR., by Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales, is recognized as the definitive biography of Horatio Alger, Jr., and HORATIO ALGER, JR.: A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY, by Bob Bennett, is recognized as the most current definitive authority on Alger's works.



## RANDOM REPORTS FROM ALGERLAND

BY Jack Bales

Someone once asked me where I had learned of the Alger Society. It was back in 1968. A rare book dealer in Chicago had sold me a copy of Ralph Gardner's biography (in mint condition, with dust jacket, for \$7.50!) and I had carefully read all his references 'n the back. Ralph had thanked Forrest Campbell, and had mentioned the NEWSBOY. All I had was a city to go by, but I wrote Forrest in Kalamazoo. Luckily, Forrest worked for the Post Office Department, and an employee gave him my letter.

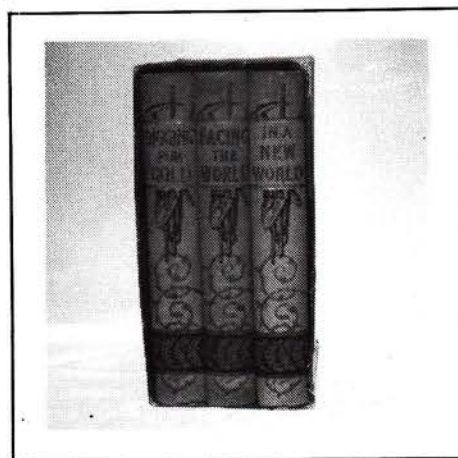
My first convention was the one in 1969, hosted by Forrest. I took the train to Kalamazoo, (I was 17 at the time) and Forrest met me at the station. Unfortunately, it was a small turnout of members as it was during the summer, and most people could not make it, but to my way of thinking, though the group was small, it was a great group of people. Carl Hartmann, Herb Risteen, Les Langlois, Jack Row, Irene Gurman, and I went book hunting, and I came back home on the train with a suitcase full of Algers and all my clothes stuffed in a pillowcase.

My first big convention was a couple of years later in Sioux Falls. Carl Hartmann and I drove together, and we got to talking so much that Carl inadvertently drove EIGHTY miles out of his way, and we had to drive another eighty to get back on course. That was the only time that I ever heard Carl swear!

It was in Sioux Falls where I first met a lot of the old-time members like Ralph Gardner, Bob Bennett, and Dale Thomas--members who are still active in the Society.

With the proliferation of top-notch Alger collections, I am reminded of an article that Ralph Gardner wrote back in 1971 for NEWSBOY called "The Big Alger Question." In it he talks about what was the most difficult Alger for him to find. He said that it was not TIMOTHY CRUMP'S WARD--he had been collecting for 20 years before he

even heard of TIM. It was a first of FAME AND FORTUNE which caused him the most problems, and Ralph added that another was THE 500 DOLLAR CHECK with Porter and Coates imprinted on the spine. A regular feature in NEWSBOY on this subject would be most interesting, or perhaps a story on members' most interesting finds. Gil O'Gara had a similar column running in his YELLOWBACK LIBRARY a few months ago, and perhaps we can do the same thing. In fact, since Jim Ryberg's NEWSBOY has rekindled my enthusiasm for Alger, I'll volunteer to act as a clearinghouse for such stories, and I'll put them all together each issue as an article. So... what was your most difficult Alger to find? or what is your most unique collecting story? Send them to me, Jack Bales, 119 Lakeshore Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22405.



In the many letters and cards that Ralph Gardner and I exchange, we occasionally comment on Ken Butler, and how he was one of the guiding forces behind HAS. Ken lives only an hour or so from my hometown, so way back when I was in high school I would visit him from time to time. Once we had an HAS board meeting there, which a number of officers and directors attended. Ken is a gentleman from the old school, a true Alger hero, and meticulous in everything he does. His "Time Was" Village Museum (12 buildings on 12 acres)



was founded because he had so many antiques and automobiles that he decided to make a museum out of them all, and no visitor can leave the museum without admiring Ken's attention to detail. He's one of a kind!

\* \* \* \*

A FEW IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE  
SUN SERIES

BY

Bob Sawyer

At this time I feel it is necessary to explain why it is that I came to publish "The Sun Series."

To go back to the beginning: in 1980 I was really excited about Horatio Alger and the Horatio Alger Society. I had been able to collect quite a few of the various formats and editions of the 120+ Alger titles. In studying Bob Bennett's Bibliography, I was disturbed to find that many titles were not readily available to the average collector. I noted that titles like "Madeline, the Temptress," "Herbert Seldon," "The Secret Drawer," "The Discarded Son," "The Cooper's Ward," "Mason, the Miser," "The Gipsy Nurse," "The Mad Heiress," and "Marie Bertrand" had only been serialized and never issued as first editions or in hard cover format. I had corresponded quite regularly with a good Society member, Ernie Sanford. Ernie told me that he could furnish me with copies of all of these stories, crudely reprinted from the original serializations. Ernie sent them to me, and after reading them, I decided to type them out and have them bound so I could have them on my bookshelves along with the rest of my collection. All but one of them, "Marie Bertrand," were originally published as serializations in THE NEW YORK SUN so I called them "The Sun Series."

I am a "hunt and peck" typist--but, nevertheless, I went to work and tediously typed over 800 pages, a few pages each day. I noted that some of the titles had been later revised or rewritten by Alger under new titles and with expanded plots or that some segments were partially re woven into

later Alger stories. They were "The Discarded Son" as HELEN FORD; "The Cooper's Ward" as TIMOTHY CRUMP'S WARD; "Mason, the Miser" as CHARLIE CODMAN'S CRUISE; "The Gipsy Nurse" as PAUL PRESCOTT'S CHARGE.

I decided that it would be interesting to include footnotes with each story showing the changes, errors, and improvements made in the rewritings by Alger. As these stories were some of his earliest efforts, I felt that his skills had matured as the years went by. I also felt that he had gradually drifted away from the adult-type fiction and believed that he was better accepted as a juvenile fiction writer. "Madeline, the Tempress," "The Mad Heiress," and "Marie Bertrand" were examples of some he did not attempt to rewrite as they were of the adult type of fiction.

Finally in 1982 I completed my project, had the typed pages xeroxed and reduced and sent a set to Frank Schott, my friend the bookbinder. Frank put each story in hard covers. I took these to Bob Williman's Alger Convention and was both pleased and amazed when eight members asked to have copies made up for their own collections. Members Eddie LeBlanc and Bob Bennett looked them over and authenticated them as first edition Algers!

In the introduction for "Marie Bertrand," I noted--"With no apologies for my less than professional typing and copying skills, I hope that this will enable my Alger-buff friends and myself to enjoy Alger's earliest attempts at fiction."

I have always been proud of "The Sun Series" as I felt it enabled me to accomplish something worthwhile with the Alger Society. It gave me much pleasure to furnish sets to my friends and was quite proud when one of the most knowledgeable members of the Society, Stanley Pachon wrote me on September 14, 1986, "There is no question that your nine volumes of "The Sun Series" are genuine first editions and every Alger collector should be proud to include them in their collection."