



# THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

# NEWSBOY



*Horatio Alger, Jr.*

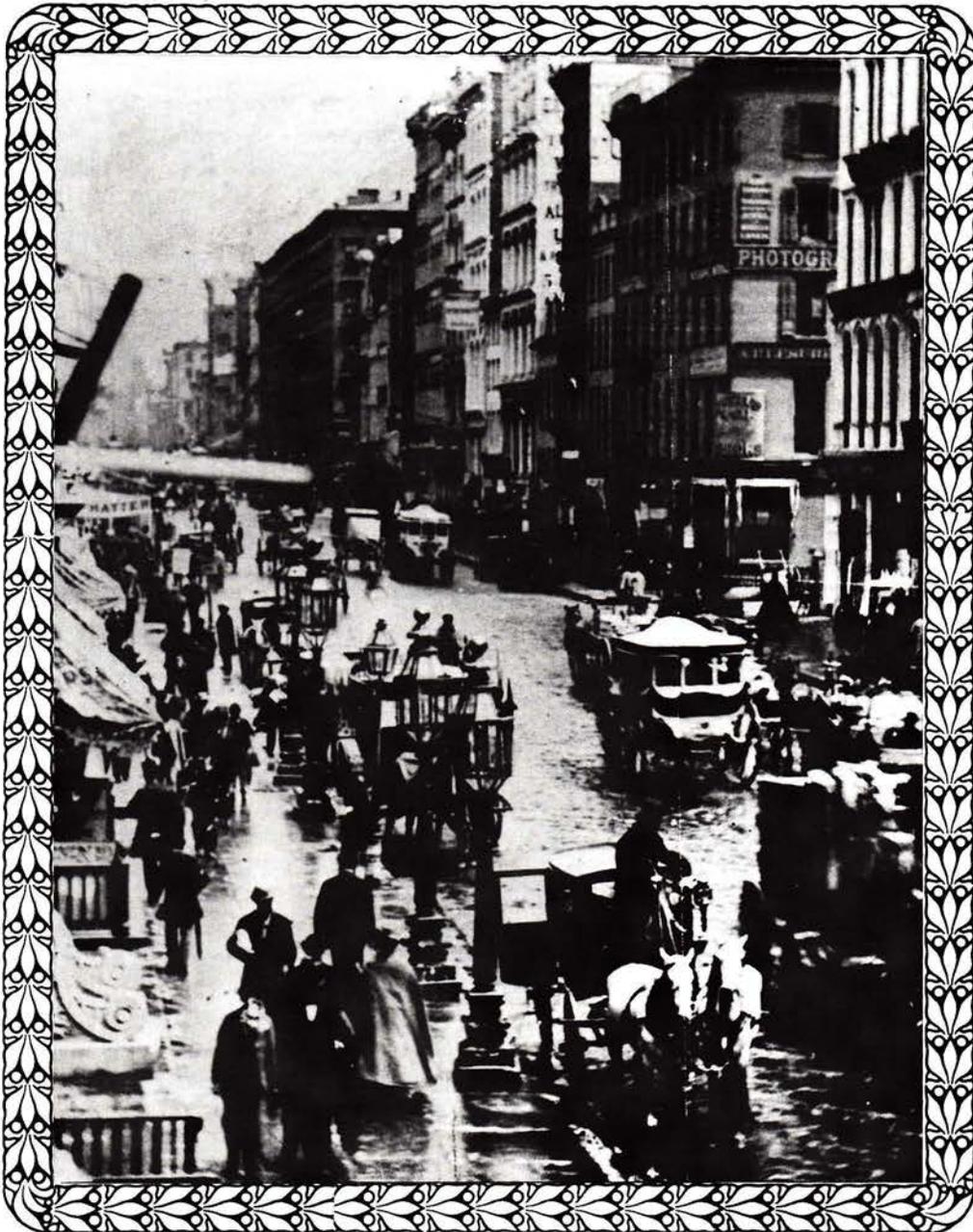
1832 - 1899

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

Volume XXVII

MAY-JUNE, 1989

NUMBER 6



New York City, ca. 1867, Broadway as Horatio Alger, Jr. saw the street. Submitted by Ralph Gardner who writes, "I think I can spot Ragged Dick, Ben, Mark, and a few of the others."

## 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, George Owens; Vice-president, Frank Jaques; Executive Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann; Treasurer, Alex T. Shaner. 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 Drive, Lansing, MI 48910. Manuscripts, letters to the editor, and correspondence for the general membership should be directed to NEWSBOY editor, Jim Ryberg, 930 Bayland, Houston, Texas 77009-6505. 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, Ohio 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. Letters and manuscripts are welcomed but will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with the submission.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gentlemen:

I am a Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Solomon Islands and my main project is helping establish libraries in the primary schools of Western Province and to help get community libraries in some of the larger villages.

As a long time fan of Horatio Alger, I am asking for help from your members. The works of Alger should prove popular with the young people of Solomon Islands. I can think of nothing more helpful to these students than being able to read stories about true young heroes.

Of course, we could use all kinds of literature. Our main need is for texts, reference books, or story books for elementary school children who have a hard time reading in English. Another need is for books on teaching methodology, especially for teaching English as a foreign language. Books of general interest for older readers will be placed in community libraries in the larger villages. Magazines are especially desired.

I realize that there are too few Alger books in print today. But the children would especially enjoy the more recent releases such as SILAS SNOBDEN'S OFFICE BOY. I can not recommend sending antique books to a tropical climate.

Books and educational materials sent to Educational Division, Box 36, GIZO, Western Province, Solomon Islands (Pacific) will come in duty free.

Thank you for any assistance you can provide for this project.

Sincerely,

Jane Marlow Willis

\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim:

I have a few more thoughts going on in my head with regards

to articles for NEWSBOY. When I get them together, I'll forward those on along to you. One idea is on the Alger paper titles. Another thought is "Adrift in New York" as appearing in the COMFORT magazine...April, May, and June, 1902 in which a few chapters were run in each issue and then the two-part supplement which ran Part I in May with Part II in June. I have all of these and find it interesting. Why did only a few chapters appear each of those months? Did they always have a two-part supplement in mind? Maybe they figured a quick two-part supplement would help boost subscriptions.

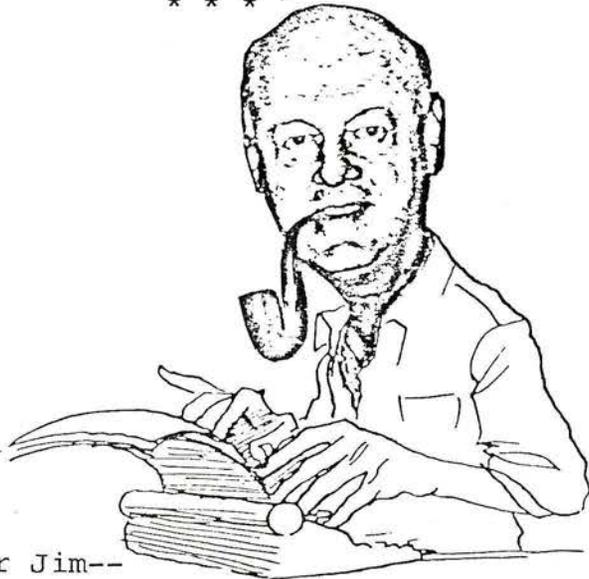
...Keep up the good work with the NEWSBOY. Everyone really enjoys it now.

Best wishes,

Bill Russell

(Editor: Thanks, Bill. I look forward to receiving your latest Alger research.)

\* \* \*



Dear Jim--

I found a lot to like in the March-April NEWSBOY. It was well worth waiting for. Bill Russell's discovery of the H. T. Coates boxed set of 3 Alger titles is truly sensational!!! A number of ads indicated that a number of Horatio's books came in boxed sets, but this is the first time I've ever seen one of these cartons. Now that we know what to look for, perhaps others will be

uncovered. But I doubt it. What Bill acquired is unique, surely considerably more valuable than a dust jacket.

Also most pleasing was Peter Walther's letter. I haven't yet met Peter, but from all that Wallace Palmer tells me (about what a great guy Peter is), I feel I already know him well. It was also great seeing a letter from Irene Gurman, who used to be a regular at our conventions before she moved to Florida.

Very intriguing was Donald Choate's letter about his grandfather, George C. Fairbanks of Natick. I suppose Don knows that Alger wrote in a letter of his conversation with Wilson Fairbanks (in 1896, a young newspaperman in Philadelphia, who was vacationing in Natick where he lived). And I'd guess that George C. and Wilson were related. Perhaps Don will tell us. I knew Wilson Fairbanks well in 1942, when I was a copy boy at the NEW YORK TIMES and Mr. Fairbanks--nobody called him Wilson--was the chief editor on the Times' telegraph desk (the "telegraph desk" is now known as the National News Desk).

I estimated, from what Alger wrote, that Wilson Fairbanks was 76 years old when I knew him in '42. The pity of it is that when, in the early 1960's, I was writing HORATIO ALGER; OR, THE AMERICAN HERO ERA, I was looking everywhere for people who knew Alger personally. Actually I found 3. But I didn't know until later (when I read the Alger letter) about Wilson Fairbanks. Had I only known in 1942 of their connection four decades earlier! I often wondered what he could have told me about Horatio.

Also, I was absolutely delighted with Jack Bales' review of my new book, WRITERS TALK TO RALPH D. GARDNER. As my rent is due, I hope every H.A.S. member will run out and buy a copy. They can order it at their local bookshops, or order direct from the publisher, Scarecrow Press, Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840. The price is \$35.00.

Incidentally, we had 10 copies for sale at the Chillicothe Convention and they sold out quickly. I'll be happy to autograph copies for all who request it.

Keep up the great work!  
Cordially,

Ralph

\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim,

Just received NEWSBOY and again well done.

Enclosed you'll find a clipping of Middlesex newspaper for which you asked for address so you can write or call them for rights on that story I sent you about Alger and the Elliot Oak tree. Hope it's of interest to you and the Society as it was to me.

A long time ago, I once came across a Bible which had Rev. Alger, Sr.'s name in it for \$100. I was short of funds so had to pass it up at the time. Later on I went back to the shop and found it was sold to a man from California for the price of \$700. My sad Mistake! I never did get his name but still wonder if he belongs to the Alger Society. Ever since then, whenever I see anything about Alger, I go for it.

Again, thanks, and maybe this story can find its way around the Alger grapevine and come to a happy ending.

Your friend,

Don Choate  
PO Box 107  
Sudbury, MASS 01776-0001

(Thanks for the news, Don. If anyone knows what has happened to the Alger Bible, drop us a line.)

\* \* \* \*

Dear Jim:

I came across this puzzle the other day. I work twice a week as the

telephone receptionist at Rose Park Senior Citizens Center, and the "Find-a-Word" puzzles help to pass the time between calls. It seems that the name Horatio Alger is not forgotten!

If only I had thought ahead and not worked the puzzle called "Paul Prescott's Charge," I could have asked to use it in the NEWSBOY. The book in which the puzzle appeared was the PUZZLE CHALLENGER SUPREME SEARCH-A-WORD compiled by Helen Rudin, published by Playmore, Inc., Publishers and Waldman Publishing Company. The book costs \$5.95. Some of the words in the puzzle were "Ben" and "worthless stock" and "runaway."

We were sorry that we were not able to attend the annual meeting in Ohio, but my sister, Velnor Dunning, suffered a massive heart attack. She is slowly recovering.  
Sincerely,

Evelyn M. Grebel

(Editor--Thank you, Evelyn, for sharing the information about the puzzle. Extend the best wishes for a speedy recovery to Velnor from all of her friends in the Horatio Alger Society.)

\* \* \* \*

Jim

A homeless man named Jim Shear wrote this in the Marlboro Park for me on June 3, 1989 as I sat listening to him tell of the history of Marlboro, Mass. He lives in a shelter and is 62 years old...an interesting story!

Donald Choate

"Horatio Alger, on the Right Track"  
by James W. (Jim) Spear  
Marlboro, Mass. June 3, 1989

He lived in Marlboro for a period of years during which he wrote some of his finest writings. His home was just a few yards away from the path that General Henry Knox and his artillery train took from Ticonderoga to

Cambridge in the winter of 1775-76.

I wonder if he did not take inspiration from that fact and used that to try to inspire others.

History tells us what a gigantic effort was involved in General Knox's man-killing trip from Fort Ticonderoga and I believe that Alger often contemplated on history which gave him the impetus to write as he did.

You must remember that Alger's style of writing was somewhat individualistic as any good writer's must be, also that his writings were exceptionally well received in his day, and to this day, his writings are much sought after. They are a literary treasure and they also are a vital part of America's legacy to the world.

James W. (Jim) Spear  
6/3/89

(Editor: This section of the NEWSBOY includes material from the Pacific and from the shelter...from the scholars and from the readers. Little do we realize the incredible impact Horatio Alger, Jr. has had on this world. Many of us feel great pride to be able to belong to a society which perpetuates the respect and honor of a significant American author.)

\* \* \* \*

The NEWSBOY  
c/o Jim Ryberg

I recently made a trip to Illinois and on the way back stopped in Mendota where the first Alger convention was held 25 years ago. I went to the lovely home of our co-founder, Ken Butler, and his wife Doris. This was at Doris' request. As most of you know, Ken is in ill health, and she is finding it necessary to liquidate many of the accumulations of a long and happy married life. She was wondering about his Alger collection, and I volunteered to stop in and look it over. I arrived early on a Saturday morning and was welcomed in their beautiful home. With Ken unable to carry on, she has found it necessary to close their unusual

museum, Time Was, which has a fine display of 18th and early 19th century antiques, relics, cars, etc. I had visited this unusual place many times before I ever personally knew Ken and his association with the Alger Society.

I found Ken had a fine collection of about 225 Algers in excellent condition. There were about 15 or 20 1st editions; some of the more rare reprints, and a letter signed by Horatio Alger. The best book was a pristine copy of NUMBER 91 by Alger under the pseudonym of Arthur Lee Putnam and published by Lovell Co. Ken apparently loved the Alger stories and cared more about condition than he did editions.

After I had listed the books, Mrs. Butler and I talked it over and decided to box them up and take them with me to be presented in auction at our next convention. She was more concerned about getting them into the hands of Alger Society members than anything else. I plan to have a small sticker made up stating that "This book is from the private collection of Ken Butler, co-founder of the Horatio Alger Society," a memento every Alger Society member should treasure. As is usually the case, the Society will realize 15% of the amount received from the auction.

Bob Sawyer, PF-455

\* \* \* \*

Mr. Ryberg,

Here are copies of letters between my grandfather and two magazines which published Alger information. If these copies are not good enough let me know and I will obtain a higher quality copy for you. My dad (D. W. Phillips, Sr. -Ed) should be contacting you shortly. I enjoyed meeting you and the visit. Good luck with the newsletter.

Mark L. Phillips

Below are two letters between the grandfather of Mark Phillips and HARPER'S MAGAZINE and THE SATURDAY REVIEW, both written in 1939. The HARPER'S MAGAZINE letter adds some insight to what is already known about the book, ALGER, A BIOGRAPHY WITHOUT A HERO, written by Herbert Mayes.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE  
*Editorial Rooms*

HARPER & BROTHERS  
PUBLISHERS



49 EAST 33rd STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

October 9, 1939.

Dear Mr. Phillips:

"Alger, a Biography without a Hero" was published in 1928 and that author was Herbert R. Mayes. His address appears to be 91 Central Park West, New York. You may be interested to know that when I wrote him to ask him if he had made any estimate of sales of the Alger books he replied that he had had no luck at all at getting such figures, and added, "I wasn't even successful in compiling a complete list of things the man wrote; after the biography appeared several people sent along titles which I had not myself discovered."

I found the whole subject of the fortunes of his books pretty bewildering, for most of them were published by firms which went out of existence in due course. Then other publishers would take them on and sometimes apparently a book would be published simultaneously at different prices by different publishers. I decided it just wasn't worth the headache which would be involved in trying to straighten out the tangle. But then, I have never seen much point in the alleged science of bibliography.

Sincerely yours,

*Frederick L. Allen*

Kenneth G. Phillips, Esq.,  
Scott & White Hospital,  
Temple, Texas.



*The Saturday Review*

of LITERATURE

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HENRY SPIGEL CANBY  
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY  
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Contributing Editors

September 7, 1939

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Mr. Allen's article appeared in the Saturday Review for September 17, 1938. If you would like to order this, the price is fifty cents (\$1.00 when over a year old), and the Circulation Department would be glad to forward it to you.

Mr. Allen has never written a full-length biography of Horatio Alger, but if you wish to get in touch with him he can be reached in care of Harper and Bros., 49 East 33rd Street, New York City.

Yours truly

*F. W. Allen*

Ed. sec.

Mr. Kenneth G. Phillips  
Scott and White Hospital  
Temple, Texas



Dear Jim:

Congratulations on your appointment as the new editor of NEWSBOY! I really enjoyed your November-December issue, especially "News from Algerland." It puts our members a little closer in touch with each other.

Also I am enclosing a copy of my edition of BERTHA'S CHRISTMAS VISION published by Hurst which has an entirely different cover from those pictured on the cover of the Nov-Dec issue. My copy has a picture of a girl with a hat in a cameo surrounded by orange tulips with a green background applied on the green woven cloth. The other two

copies I have are as pictured and described on the Nov-Dec Issue. Thus, there are at least three different versions by Hurst. Maybe there is even another out there...have you checked your collection lately?

Keep up the good work; we are all looking forward to down-to-earth articles about Alger and especially Alger collectors.

Thanks!

Hank Gravbelle

(Editor: Hank, maybe we can get some of the owners of the Hurst mini-editions of BERTHA to send a photocopy of their covers, too.)

\* \* \* \*

#### A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME ALGER DUST JACKETS

BY

Bill Russell

A while back I received a letter from Milt Ehlert. In the letter Milt mentioned that Alger titles were getting a lot harder to find--especially after reaching one hundred titles. Milt added that he was going to collect Algers with dust jackets which started me thinking that maybe this was a different approach. We have Society members who may collect Algers by publisher..Burt or Winston or Whitmans, but I haven't heard of any member just concentrating on Alger titles with dust jackets.

I thought that maybe it would be interesting to write about the various dust jackets. We have all seen at one time or another an Alger in dust jacket, but not too many jackets survived over the years because of the quality of paper or perhaps the kids just threw them away.

There is a good chance that if you own any Algers published by Hurst, Donohue, or A.L. Burt, they originally came with a dust jacket. But how many of us have seen a Street & Smith or H.M.Caldwell book in dust jacket? Probably very few of us. One can also see a copy of THE YOUNG BOOK AGENT or YOUNG CAPTAIN JACK published by Grosset and Dunlap with a dust jacket from time to time.

One of the easiest dust jackets to find is one published by the Goldsmith Publishing Company of Cleveland. These Algers were published during the thirties and had colorful jackets. They also had jackets made of a high quality paper--what I call a good solid jacket...built to last or built to protect the book's cover. The A.L. Burt editions in the Chimney Corner "Hero Format" were also of a higher quality paper. They are seen from time to time. However, the A.L. Burt editions in the "Frying Pan" and "Fisher Boy" formats were just the opposite. The two jackets that I've examined have very thin paper which over the years has become both brown and brittle. These jackets did not hold up at all. I was amazed that the jackets had even survived as long as they did. The "Fisher Boy" format was introduced by Burt in 1907, and the "Frying Pan" format was introduced in 1909. The H.M. Caldwell and the Street & Smith even go back much earlier, perhaps as far back as 1902.

Dust jackets on Alger titles do go back a bit further...there is one copy of THE YOUNG SALESMAN in the first edition which has a jacket, and that edition was published in 1896, so dust jackets go back before the turn of the century. I have also heard of a dust jacket for a McKay title.

So it is possible to turn up a title with a jacket, but they are few and far between.

\* \* \* \*

Special thanks from Bill Russell for help in research from his partic'lar friends Milt Ehlert, Jerry Friedland, and Brad Chase.

\* \* \* \*

Editor's note: For additional research on John C. Winston dust jackets, see Sawyer and Thorp's PUBLICATION FORMATS OF THE FIFTY-NINE STORIES BY HORATIO ALGER, JR. AS REPRINTED BY THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO., Nancy Turner Publisher, 1984.

For information on A.L. Burt formats and dust jackets, see HORATIO ALGER BOOKS PUBLISHED BY A.L.BURT by Bradford S. Chase, 1983.



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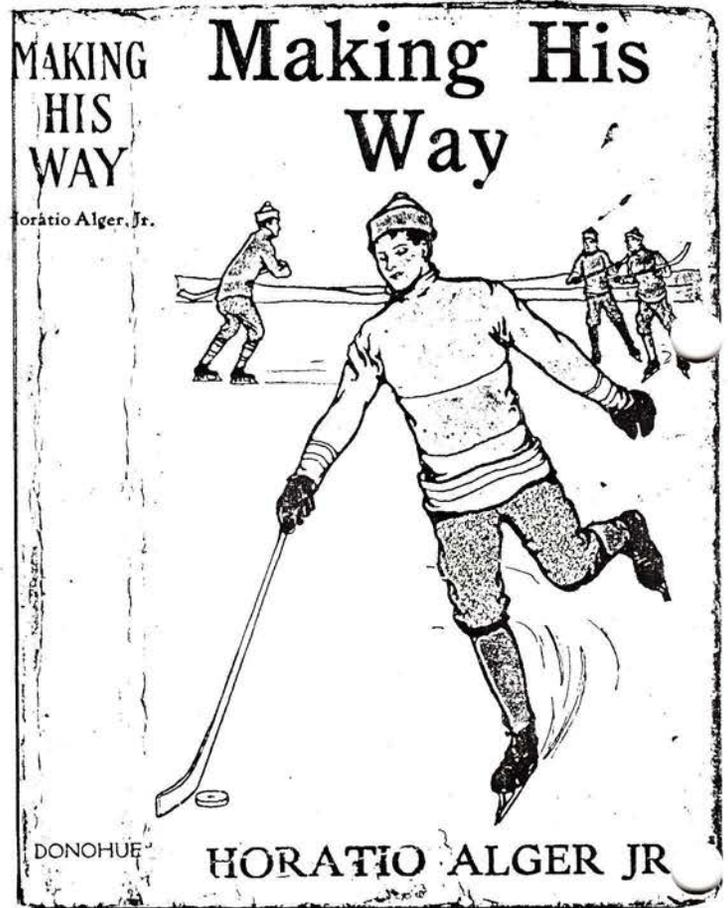
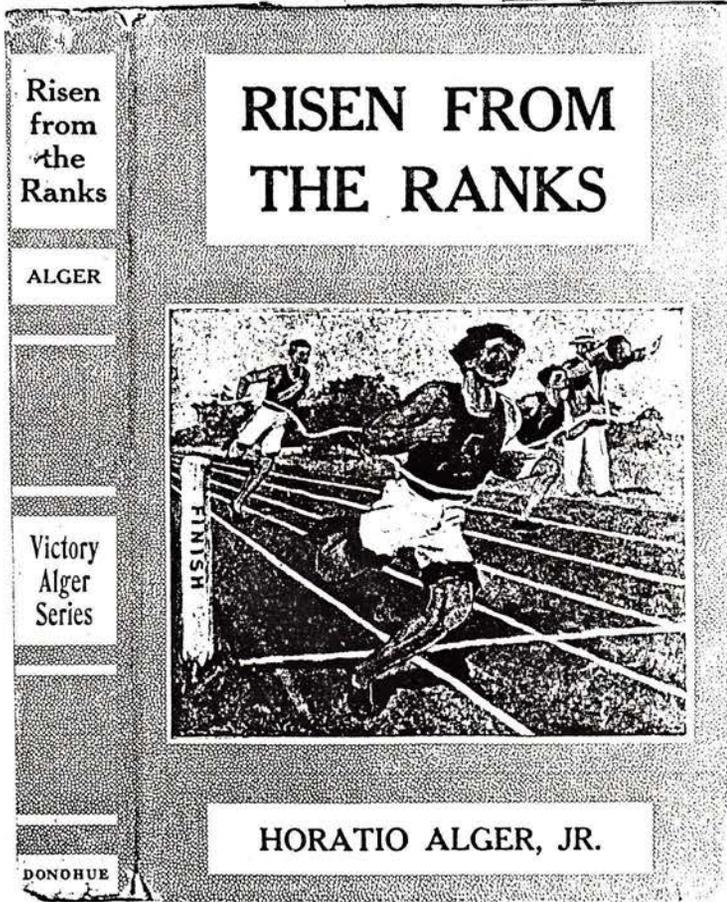
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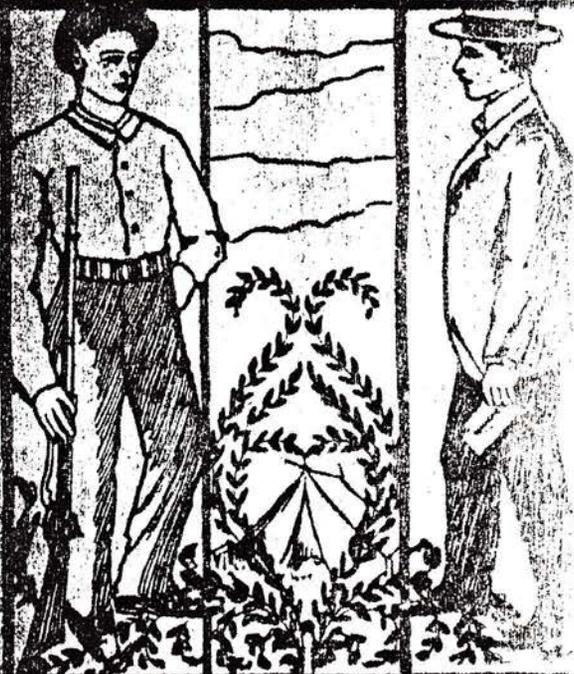
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