



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 XXVIII

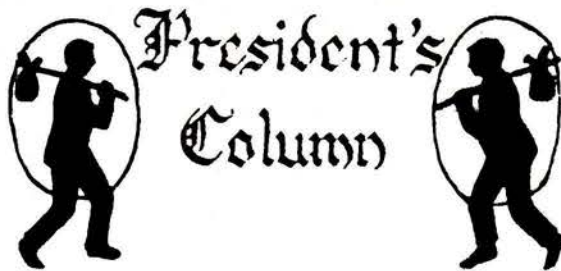
NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1990

NUMBER 9

Seasons Greetings



Happy Chanukah



Four months and counting, until our next convention which will be in Indianapolis, Indiana in the good old U.S. of A. May 2, 3, and 4, 1991. Bernie and Marcy Biberdorf are going all out to have a great convention.

I have been reminded that the most urgent need for our Society is a full time "Editor". [like Harry Walton in "Risen From The Ranks"], for the Newsboy. The By-Laws provide that the President appoint the Editor.

The Editor collects material from letters, newspapers, libraries, historical data, research articles and other sources. This is a voluntary position. The Editor is not paid.

Typing and layout of the material is done by others then to the printer, and finally collated with ads and other inserts for mailing.

My thoughts for the qualifications of Editor are;

[A] Should be a member of H.A.S.

[B] Should have the desire and interest in the works, history and aims of Horatio Alger, and should be capable of combining these into a forum for the enlightenment and interest of the members.

[C] Should attend the Annual Convention so that as many members as possible can have a personal relationship. Also will take part in the business session where the guidance and direction for the future of the Society is discussed.

[D] The Editor should be someone who can be counted on for a long time, years and years. This commitment is needed because it will take time to develop a working correspondence between members, and to provide continuity for the bi-monthly Newsboy.

[D] There is a lot of Alger reference material available to the Editor. Robert Sawyer has made available a complete set of back issues of the Newsboy. Carl Hartmann has a lot of research material from other members and from former editors which would be made available to the new Editor.

[F] The Editor can be male or female, old or young, and live anywhere in the world as long as mail and/or phone is conveniently available.

[G] This is not a full time job. Doing a little each day or two should result in a fine publication. Vacations, occasional school/work conflicts - no problem. There are some members who would volunteer to be a guest editor for one or two issues.

Continued Page 7

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 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 bimonthly [six issues per year]. Membership fee for any twelve month period is \$15.00, with single issues costing \$3.00. Please make all remittances payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, change of address, and other correspondence should be sent to the Society's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann-4907 Allison Drive-Lansing, MI 48910.

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography

BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY THE H.A.S.

The Society recognizes Bob Bennett's Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Comprehensive Bibliography, as the most current, definitive authority on Alger's works.

PUBLICATION FORMATS OF THE FIFTY-NINE STORIES BY HORATIO ALGER Jr. as reprinted by the John C. Winston Co. COMPILED BY Bob Sawyer, PF-455 and Jim Thorp, PF-574.

HORATIO ALGER BOOKS, Published by A.L. BURT by Bradford S. Chase.

HORATIO ALGER OR THE AMERICAN HERO ERA by Ralph Gardner.

THE LOST LIFE OF HORATIO ALGER, Jr. by Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales.

Newsboy ad rates: 1 page, \$32.00; 1/2 page \$17.00; 1/4 page, \$9.00; per column [1"x3-3/4"] \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to the Horatio Alger Society, to Carl T. Hartmann, 4907 Allison Drive-Lansing, MI 48910.

YOU ASKED FOR IT!

My love affair for the books of Horatio Alger, Jr. started when I [now 58] was a little boy. I somehow got hold of a thin NYBC copy of Tom the Bootblack which I read and reread. Also, my father [born in '02] had a Hurst copy of Only an Irish Boy which he had cherished since he was a young lad, being of Irish descent.

Although I have always been an avid collector, the notion of collecting Algers did not really hit me until about 1970 when I picked up 3 or 4 cheap reprints at an estate sale. Being a bonafide completist, I decided to try to collect all of the titles listed in the back of the books. The list kept getting longer and longer as I found more titles. Algers, especially the more deluxe editions, are few and far between in Oregon so my collection wasn't much to brag about.

My first breakthrough in acquiring more deluxe volumes was my discovery of a used book store in Medford, Oregon that maintained a nice collection of boys and girls series books including usually 8 to 10 Algers. The owner said he got most of these books on buying trips back east.

Then in 1985 the dam broke. My married daughter Kandi White came across a veritable gold mine of Alger books in a book store in Anaheim California. As an avid reader of my Algers she was well aware of my interest and called me for advice. I read off to her the list of book titles I had [about 30] and told her to buy any other titles but not to spend more than about \$10.00 each. She did not know nor did I which publishers were most desirable so she came home with forty or fifty different titles. Mostly Burts, Hursts, Winstons, and the thicker Donohues, nicer looking books than I was used to but not the original publishers as I was soon to learn.

Kandi came home with two things more valuable than the books, however. First, she brought me a Gardner bibliography. Now I could see where I was going with my collection. Its like I had been driving in a foreign country without a road map. Plus it gave me information I lacked regarding first editions. Second, she learned that there was a Horatio Alger Society. It was about a year before I located the society address in a reference book in a library and joined the Society. By that time I had 100 titles so I was admitted as a 100 club member. However, I still had virtually no first editions and only a few Lorings, etc. Any serious collector of Alger books could probably list almost precisely the thirty-some titles I lacked.

One by one I started picking these titles off, including a few firsts, by responding to ads in the Newsboy. I purchased books from several distinguished Alger Society members including Bob Bennett Ralph Gardner, Bob Sawyer and Gil Westgard. Most of my purchases these last two years have been from Ed Mattson. Slowly but surely I upgraded my collection of firsts [now 60], original publishers and improved book conditions. Very few of the 100 books I owned when I joined the Society are still part of my current "best copy per title" collection. [sound familiar?]

I have every Alger full-length book listed by Bennett in some form except for The Life of Edwin Forrest and Seeking His Fortune. I lack Dan the Detective and Finding a Fortune but have reprint titles. Can anyone help me here?

With further Algers almost impossible to come by, I turned my attention to collecting books from the Stratemeyer Syndicate. There were two reasons that I chose Stratemeyer. He not only completed the last eleven Alger titles. He also authored my very favorite childhood books, the Rover Boys. I narrowed my collection to books for boys written through 1930 [the year Stratemeyer died]. As I write this I have over 475 books. This leaves me with about 300 to go but many of these are from the New York Five Cent Library and the like. [I haven't broken into that vault yet!] Any suggestions here would also be appreciated.

In case you are not aware, it is purported that Stratemeyer wrote or outlined and final edited most if not all of the books put out by the syndicate until his death. His boy's series books include Tom Swift, Hardy Boys, Motor Boys, Bomba the Jungle Boy X bar X Boys, Ted Scott, Radio Boys, Don Sturdy, Frank Webster books, Baseball Joe and on and on. My primary bibliographic source is Stratemeyer Pseudonyms and Series Books, by Deidre Johnson, a must for serious Stratemeyer collectors. My primary supplier of books is again Ed Mattson but I do find one now and then in book stores.

I have yet to make it to an annual meeting but I hope to soon. I look forward to meeting many of you in person then. I enclose \$15.00 for a membership for my daughter Kandi who was so instrumental in helping me become a serious Alger collector.

There, I wrote. Now, how about you?

PF-790
Eugene P. Bartlett
Springfield, OR

ENTIRE COLLECTION of almost 380 volumes [200 separate titles], including 12 firsts is **FOR SALE**. Bulk purchase of entire collection or publishers preferred. Send SASE for listing to:

Robert Eastlack, PF-557
8508 Calypso Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Also available, Convention memorabilia, including miniature plates.

ALGER ENTERS THE COMPUTER AGE

Many of us know the pleasure we feel when we find an Alger book in an unusual place. Perhaps it is at the neighborhood garage sale or at a used book sale at the local library. Recently, I found a new way to get into attics across the country without leaving my desk.

I recently started subscribing to prodigy, an on-line computer system developed by Sears and IBM. Among the many hundreds of services provided by this system is an on-line bulletin board in which people can communicate with one another through the magic of electronic mail. There are many "clubs" one can join including a book club. I scanned through the topics listed and saw no mention of Horatio Alger, Jr.

I decided it was high time that Horatio enter the electronic mail age on a national level and wrote a short letter addressed to no-one in particular. To my distinct pleasure, within forty-eight hours, I received three replies including one from a man with a few of his boyhood Alger books in his attic and one from a librarian who gave me several collecting tips. As we exchanged a few electronic letters, I was pleased to discover that she was a member of HAS.

I am now writing electronically on a regular basis to many people throughout the country and the work of the Horatio Alger Society is being broadcast coast-to-coast over this innovative network.

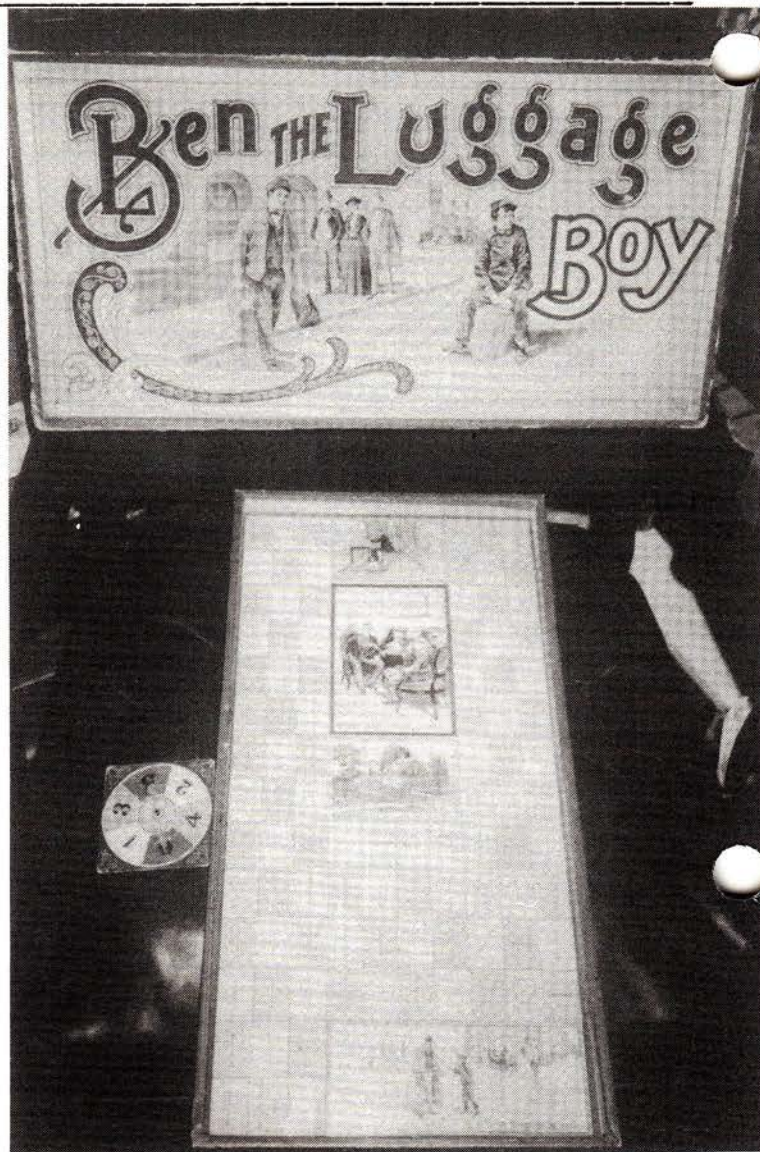
Another use of space age technology in collecting Alger books is the use of cellular car phones and telecopiers ["fax machines"]. My collection is catalogued in a computer data base. I recently printed out the entire collection along with a "need list" and sent it over the fax machine to a fellow HAS member. Seconds later, he was able to review my list and call me with comments and questions.

Recently, while driving near York, Pennsylvania, I wanted to visit a multi-dealer used book shop. It was clear that I was going to get there after closing time. I called the manager of the shop from the car phone and explained that I was traveling through the area and wouldn't be back in the area in the foreseeable future. He graciously agreed to the shop open a little late knowing I was coming. My search, which wouldn't have taken place at all if I hadn't been able to phone ahead from the turnpike yielded three books and some information about some other dealers.

This past summer, I even made arrangements to meet with another collector who also had a car phone and we were able to avoid any last minute problems of getting together through the use of our car phones.

The irony of this to me is that we are utilizing this technology to facilitate the collecting of books about an era where life was so simple...a world without cars, and car phones; a world without radios, movie theaters, television, or computers. What would Alger have thought of all this? Certainly no-one can say for sure, but with his love of traveling about on the "modern conveniences," one somehow thinks that he'd approve and look at all this with some amusement.

Murray D. Levin
PF-851



BEN THE LUGGAGE BOY

Above is a picture of a board game Ben The Luggage Boy, made by Milton Bradley Co., Springfield, MA.

Printed on the very colorful box is the following statement. "Title used by permission of Henry T. Coates & Co., publishers of the book.

The board has four pictures: 1. Ben looking for work, "Smash yer Baggage Sir", 2. The old Homestead, 3. Ben with another man titled "Admitted to the firm of Brandon & Sons", 4. Ben in a cell writing.

The game belongs to Jerry Friedland who sent us the picture.

If you have any information of other games from Alger's books we would appreciate the information and a picture.

LETTERS

Dear Carl:

Please accept enclosed one-half page ad for next "Newsboy" issue. My \$17. check is enclosed. Note address change and new telephone number. I have recently retired and Kitty and I are going to move to a cooler, lower tax climate in Nevada by December 1, 1990

We definitely plan to be in Indianapolis on the first weekend in May for the Society meeting. Hope to see many of our old Alger-based friends at that time.

Per my request in a recent "Newsboy", I am most willing to put together a summary of what kind of Hurst miniatures are available—titles, cover designs, dust jackets, etc. I have heard from one PF and would appreciate comments of others. "Send me your details of your collection and I will correlate info and let all Society people know at an early time."

Sincerely,
Ralph B. Chase PF-602

* * *

Dear Carl-

Enclosed is a clipping from the local paper...Brad Chase gave a well received talk to the local D.A.R.

on Horatio

Comments made to my wife were very positive.. "Best program we ever had." "Took me back to my childhood", "Going back home to my attic and look up my Algiers", etc., etc.

Very well received.

Regards
Bill McCord PF-360

Clipping and Photo printed elsewhere in this issue-

* * *

Dear Carl,

Short note to say hello and inquire about a Horatio Alger, Jr. Book I came across while I was on vacation in Maine last summer. It's called "The Train Boy", paper back in black and white. On the cover shows train in background with a boy selling Harpers Magazine. It's by Butterff Publishing Company, Box 5211, Louisville, KY.

I can't seem to find it in Ralph Gardner's book or Bob Bennette's either. Is it new or old? Maybe you can let me know as I've been searching but to no avail.

Also I received my Newsboy and read the article on Alger books's being donated to the Marlboro Library by C. Holt, PF-380.

I'm planning to go to the paper to get the story printed and also visit the library when the show comes along. Might be interesting! Will let you know of the outcome.

Also noted letters to Editor from Rob Curtiss of which I received a note from him in Aug. 90, new member. Wrote him back but no answer as yet. Will close for now and hope to hear from you soon.

Many Thanks
Don Choate, PF-608

* * *

Dear Carl--

Sorry for the delay in getting this NEWSBOY item to you. I took a new position as an Assistant Professor of Economics this past September and life has been hectic ever since. The last time I sat down to compose this, the phone rang and the caller [my department chair] announced that we were firing an economics instructor effective the next morning -- so I had a new course to pick up. Quite a challenge, since the other chap left things in shambles and the students reeling with confusion.

At the moment, things have settled down to a dull roar and so my preoccupation now is with trying to catch up with the many tasks which haven't gotten their rightful due.

The object of our effort is to collect information which will be useful to Bernie Biberdorf in appropriately dedicating the 1991 H.A.S. meeting in Indianapolis -- so anything you can do to further that goal will be appreciated [Ed's note - Please fill in the "H.A.S. Author Search" form and send it to Judy as soon as possible.]

Hope all is well with you and your family.

Sincerely,
Judy Roobian-Mohr

* * *

Carl-

Several months ago you suggested I write a bit about my train museum. Thought maybe this news article would suffice [See "centerfold"].

Went to an auction Saturday. Bought a box of books that had 5 Tom Swift - one in dust jacket, 2 Optics, 1 Motor Boys, 1 Boy Aviator, 1 Motor Cycle Chums plus 20 other books for \$17.00. I was satisfied.

Sue wish we could have made the New York convention. Maybe next year.

Dick Burnbaugh PF-530

*To get thine ends, lay bashfulness aside;
Who fears to ask, doth teach to be denied!*
-Robert Herrick

**RALPH'S ALGER BIO/BIBLIO REISSUED;
SPECIAL LOW PRICE FOR HAS MEMBERS!**

Rated a rare book since the original 1964 Wayside Press edition went out-of-print years ago, and again after its 1978 Arco publication, Ralph Gardener's "Horatio Alger; or, The American Hero Era" is now back in print!

This new limited edition, published by American House, includes a new introduction, the complete original biography; the bibliography updated to include 1990 -- or most recently recorded -- cash values of all Alger products [first editions, reprints, hardcovers, paperbacks, short stories, articles, poems, ballads, odes, manuscript and autograph material]. It also contains the Arco edition Index, which was not in the Wayside edition

Ralph's book has long been recognized as an essential tool for collectors, booksellers, librarians and educators. It fetches high prices when offered at auction or in dealers' catalogues.

The handsome 494-page volume -- with 20 pages of black-and-white illustrations -- printed on high quality paper in sturdy hardcover library binding, is sold by the publisher at \$25. per copy. However, a special low price of \$20. per copy has now been exclusively arranged for members of the Horatio Alger Society. This offer will be especially interesting to newer members who have not, until now, been able to locate copies.

While our supply lasts, you may order as many copies as you wish, at \$20. each, postage included. Send your checks to:

Carl Hartmann, Secretary
Horatio Alger Society
4907 Allison Drive
Lansing, MI 48910

And be sure to bring your copy [or copies] to the Indianapolis Convention in May, where Ralph will happily inscribe them to you.

WANTED TO BUY: ALGER FIRST EDITIONS/BENNETT ONLY

Falling In With Fortune	- Mershon
Lost At Sea	- Mershon
Nelson The Newsboy	- Mershon
Randy On The River	- Chatterton-Peck
Helping Himself	- PSC [<u>Dark brown only</u>]
Adrift In The City	- PSC
Andy Grant's Pluck	- H.T. Coates
The Young Boatman	- Penn
Frank's Campaign	- Loring

Any papercover first edition

Send quote, condition, etc. to:
Rolfe B. Chase
4731 Fox Creek Road
Carson City, NV 89703
[702] 885-6218

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

**HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!**

**MARK YOUR '91 CALENDAR FOR
THE ANNUAL CONVENTION**

IN

INDIANAPOLIS

ON

MAY 2, 3, AND 4, 1991

FUN & BUSINESS

BUY & SELL

TRADE & BARTER

PARTY & SOLITUDE

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

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The Daily Mail, Wednesday, Sept. 19, 1990 A5

Horatio Alger, Topic At On-ti-ora D.A.R.



On-ti-ora Chapter DAR held its first fall meeting on September 8, at the United Methodist Church, Woodland Ave., Catskill. Bradford S. Chase of Connecticut, former president of the Horatio Alger Society, spoke to the On-ti-ora Chapter, NSDAR about Alger's impact on American society. Chase brought with him a varied collection of Alger memorabilia ranging from an edition in Japanese to a copy of the "Boys Weekly" featuring an Alger story. He showed members several first-day covers of the Horatio Alger postage stamp, issued to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Alger's death. Since Chase's own particular interests are Alger's published by A.L. Burt Company, he displayed various volumes published by that firm. A 1927 biography of Alger by Herbert Mayes, which was totally fictitious and had been written as a joke, but which was taken seriously by the public, was on display along with a modern biography by Alger Society member Ralph Gardner of the "New York Times" who wrote a factual and scholarly work on Alger's life.

Of special interest was a copy of "Phil the Fiddler" in which Alger exposed the pardone system which made virtual slaves of young boys. One major result of this book was the first set of child labor laws in the country.

Other things displayed by members and friends include a plate with the picture of Horatio Alger and autograph, a tile with "Member of Horatio Alger Society" on, a mug with his picture, and "Land of Rip Van Winkle" on the other side and a framed part of a letter written by Alger and his signature. Books included "Horatio Alger or the American Hero Era," by Ralph D. Gardner; "Horatio Alger Jr., a Comprehensive Biography," by Bob Bennett. Several small books included two copies of "Erie Train Boy" one pictured a train on the cover and a rose. Others were "Tom the Bootblack," "Luke Walton," "Strive and Success," and "Frank's Campaign," all written by Alger.

BOOK REVIEW

A new edition of "Ragged Dick" has been published by Penquin Group in their Signet Classic Editions. Published in September, 1990 the introduction was written by Alan Trachtenberg, Professor of English and Professor of American Studies at Yale University.

Since most of the introduction was rehashed material from Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales "The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr." and Gary Scharnhorst "Horatio Alger, Jr." it doesn't add anything that we don't already know. As usual he is obsessed with the Brewster era of Alger's life.

Since it doesn't bring any new facts to light about Alger I find little reason to buy it except as an addition to your Alger collection.

From Page 2

This is a longer column than I usually write, but it will be worth it if we get results. Someone-ANY-ONE - please let me know if you are the least bit interested. No one could meet all the criteria that is enumerated above, but surely there is someone out there who would be willing to accept this most responsible, and rewarding [and maybe at time flustering] position.

I would like to be able to introduce a new Editor at the upcoming Annual Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in May. Write to me at 16826 US 50, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601, or phone [614] 775-3871.

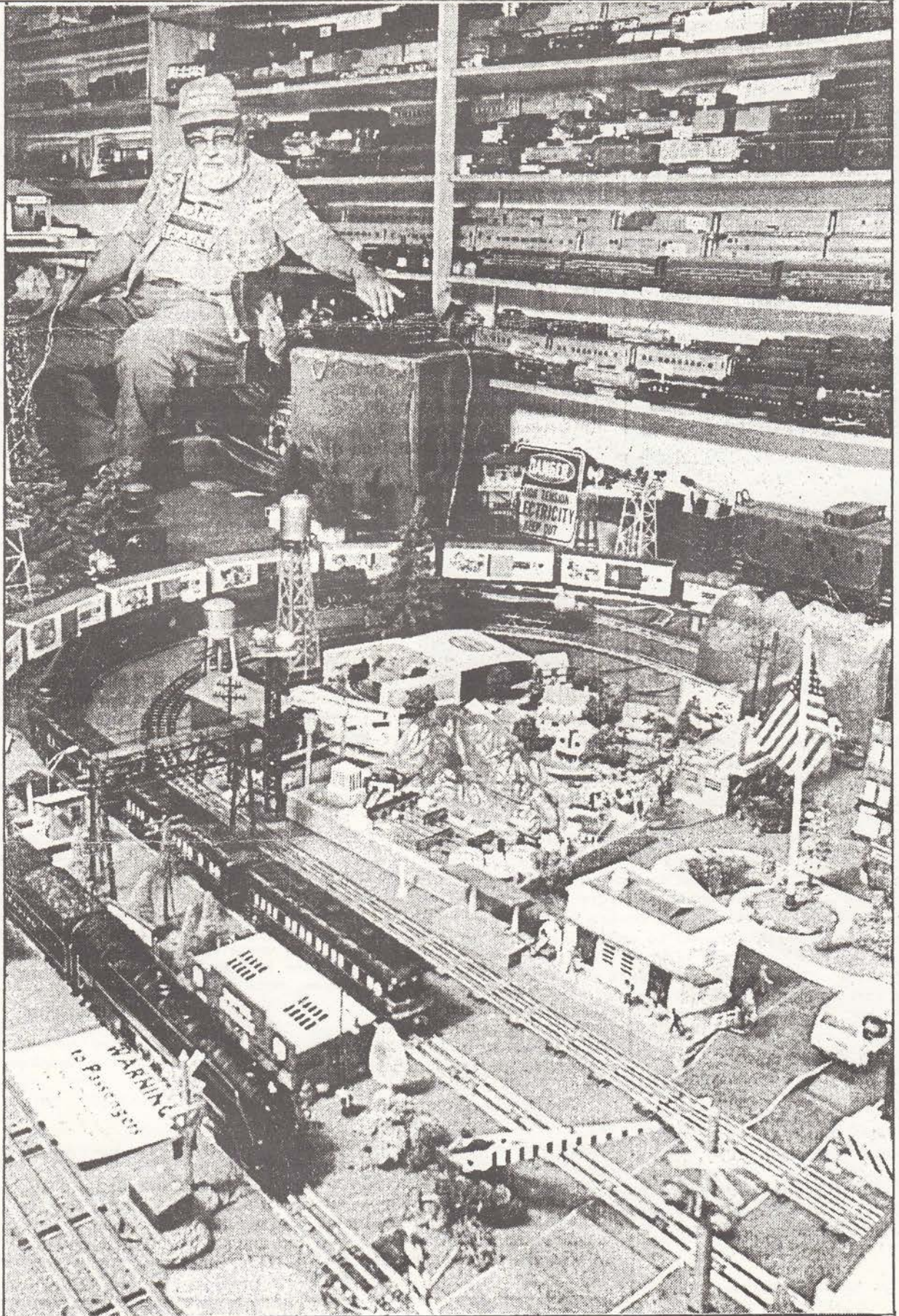
Will Wright, President
Horatio Alger Society

The greatest truths are the simplest, and so are the greatest men.

-A.W.Hare

We never know the worth of water till the well runs dry.

-Thomas Fuller



JOURNAL PHOTO /JOHN MUNSON

Dick Durnbaugh was only 10 when he got his first train - but he's been on the right track ever since.

From the Flint Journal - Tuesday, June 19, 1990

TRAIN COLLECTION HOLDS DREAMS OF HOLLY MAN

By Wendy Wenland
Journal Staff writer

HOLLY - Dick Durnbaugh was 10 years old when he received his first Lionel model train, and it changed his life.

The next year 1937, he saved his money, received extra cash from his dad and bought another Lionel. The year after that, the store that sold the trains burned. "All I could think of was all those trains burning," said Durnbaugh.

Durnbaugh, nearly 64, is long past his childhood, but he still loves trains - especially Lionels.

He owns more than 700 train engines and at least twice as many model cars. He houses his collection in a "museum" in downtown Holly called Trains and Things, which is open during festivals or whenever someone knocks on the door.

A tall bearded man, who lives with his wife, Shirley, above the museum, Durnbaugh always wears a brass Lionel Train belt buckle. He also often is seen sporting a Lionel cap and a train shirt, made by his wife.

His museum includes a barbecue grill shaped like a train, a train car hand-built out of wooden cigar boxes and at least 11 train model kits that have never been opened.

A miniature town and several tracks consume much of the floor in the front of the museum. The tiny buildings and props - including a miniature Holly complete with a collapsing and boarded-up Proulx building - all were made by Shirley.

Signs - some having nothing to do with trains - speckle the room. One reads, "My first train, 1936." Others are more whimsical: "If you value your life, keep away from my trains and my wife" and "Unattended children will be sold as slaves." Besides the models and signs, the museum includes train spikes, train passes, train postcards and assorted non-train items.

"My tractors are in that glass case, but that's a whole 'nother collection, farm toys," he said.

"My Avon transportation bottles [that hold cologne] are in another glass case. I just ordered another one of those the other day from the Avon lady."

Antique lanterns hang from the ceiling, and a Matchbox car collection is in the back,

Durnbaugh even has a barbed-wire collection. While he only has about six different kinds now, he has a book showing 951 varieties just waiting to be collected.

"I used to think they all looked alike to me," Durnbaugh said of his barbed wire. "But then probably trains all look alike to some."

Besides Lionels, Durnbaugh has a back wall covered with miniature trains he built from kits. He started putting the trains together while he was stationed in Alabama as an Army clerk-typist in 1946.

"Most of the time there was nothing to do, so I just sat there, looking through Popular Mechanics," he recalled.

While flipping through the magazine, he saw an advertisement for a model train kit. Durnbaugh said it looked like a good idea, so he bought two of them.

Durnbaugh started buying assembled models in 1963, he said, but the hobby can be expensive - some of the engines are worth \$1,000.

The retired Pontiac elementary school teacher said he made sacrifices for his collection.

"I had one new car in 1950. This last one is from 1982," he said. "Our kids always ate hot dogs and hamburgers instead of steak because I put all our money in trains."

Durnbaugh's wife, who is also a retired Pontiac teacher, said her husband's obsession came as no surprise.

"I knew what he was like when I met him," she said.

"When I was going with him, he had his tracks all set up on the floor."

The couple said they talked for a long time about finding a place for the trains.

"We talked about one day getting a building to put the trains in, but it was always kind of a dream," Durnbaugh said.

In the mid-1980's, though, they started their hunt, and they eventually found their place in Holly.

"The buildings looked interesting. And Holly - it had a nice ring to it," said Durnbaugh.

Besides, Durnbaugh said, Holly has an extra bonus - it's near the real thing. Three Grand Trunk Lines and one Chessie System line are just a few feet away.

Richard E. Durnbaugh PF-530, is the lucky "Boy," in the photo.

1991 H.A.S. Convention Organizer Seeks Authors

Have you published a book? An article outside The Newsboy? Perhaps you played a key role in helping another individual see his or her dream of publication become a reality? Or maybe you're a hi-tech author who has turned your creative talents loose and come up with new software? **TELL US WHO YOU ARE!!**

Bernie Biberdorf, PF-524, who will be hosting the 1991 Convention of the Horatio Alger Society near his Indianapolis, home, has announced that the annual meeting will be dedicated to Society members who, in the spirit of Horatio Alger, have literary accomplishments of their own.

So the search is on!

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a form with which you can help us collect information about the literary accomplishments of our membership, past and present. Please take a moment to fill out and submit it to Judy Roobian-Mohr in Columbus, Ohio. Don't be shy... We're counting on you to toot your own horns!! Also, please let us know if you have information about the accomplishments of a deceased H.A.S. member.

The news from Indianapolis is that the 1991 Horatio Alger Society Convention will be one to remember. Give us a hand as we remember our own!

NEW MEMBERS

Edwin W. Paul PF-867
2119 Douglas Blvd. Nov
Louisville, KY 40205
JoAnn T-59 [502] 451-2879

Edwin is a retired Professor from the University of Louisville. Ed LeBlanc introduced him to the Alger Society. Edwin also collects Zane Gray.

Richard A Berdan PF-868
168 Autumn Hts. Dr. Nov.
Salkum, WA 98582
Ellen T-23 [206] 985-2485

Richard is Asst. Manager, Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project. His main interest in Alger is collecting and reading as many titles as possible and learning about Alger's life. Other hobbies include Antique collecting, astronomy, bookbinding, stained & etched glass, herb gardening and antique autos.
[Richard - when do you have time to read?]

Kandi Renee White PF-869
90366 Shadows Dr. Nov.
Springfield, OR 97478

Kandi is the daughter of Gene Bartlett - PF-790.
See Gene's article in this issue.

Tony Cashman PF-870
11435 46 Ave. Nov.
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada TGH OA4
Veva T-64 [403] 434-6914

Tony is a retired broadcaster and historian with interests in Alger, travel and historical writing.

William . Yeo PF-871
7 Estes Street Nov
Amesbury, MA 01913
Cynthia T-70 [508] 388-1914

William comes to us thru a recommendation of Gene Hafner. William is an Auto Dealer and is very interested in obtaining a copy of "Robert Covington's Struggle".

ADDRESS CHANGED

David W. Thornton PF-470
2372 Wayfarer Drive Sept.
Byron, CA 94514
Alyet T-180 [90] [415] 634-5612

WELCOME BACK

Louis Peters PF-769
944 42nd. St. S.W. Nov
Wyoming, MI 49509
Mary Lou T-90 [3]

Preston R. Ziemer PF-609
2919 SW Lane Nov.
Topeka, KS 66611
T-65 [913] 267-3245

Dear Carl,

I'm stuck. I wrote this story in 1980, for a creative-writing class, and it's just sat. I truly believe that there's the germ here of something that's publishable, but I'm not quite sure where. I know it sort of falls apart in the library sequence, and that it needs about 20,000 more words to reach novella size, but, well...as I said, I'm stuck.

In any case, as Executive Secretary, I thought that you'd be the best person to ask for input.

I sure would appreciate any help that you could give me.

Your Partic'lar Friend,

Roger Scime PF-472
P.O. BOX 217
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[O.K. Members Read the story, any advice, comments or suggestions please forward to Roger or us. Actually we would be happy to receive your comments for publication in the NEWSBOY.]

THE HORATIO ALGER GANG

A Historical Fantasy by Roger Scime

It was a timeless day in the 1800s...

"Shine yer shoes, mister?" The smartly dressed man to whom the question was addressed paused for a moment and glanced at the young boy.

The lad was not more than fourteen and, from the look of his clothes-ragged, dirty coat, shapeless felt cap, soleless shoes-was having a hard time of it. The man did not need a shine, but he reached into his pocket and tossed the boy a dime anyway. With a shy smile he said, "Sorry, Johnny, but here's ten cents for your trouble."

The boy looked at the coin in his hand in disbelief, then smiled back at the other. "Thanks, gov'nor. This will go a long way towards helping me poor mother and sister eat tonight."

So many homeless boys, the man thought to himself as he continued on his way down Market Street, and so little I can do for them. He took a long deep breath of the crisp New York City air and quickened his step. He had an important appointment, and O'Connor had sounded desperate in his note. Probably needs some more fund raising help he speculated. Well, anything to help, I guess. The poor lads can barely help themselves.

Less than a block from the New York Sun Building on Fulton Street, where the Newsboy's lodging House was located, was a small bookshop that specialized in popular fiction. As the man passed he was drawn to it like a pin to a magnet. I'll just stop for a minute, he promised himself.

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As he entered, the proprietor looked up and came rushing over to greet him.

"Mr. Alger! Horatio Alger!" he exclaimed.

Horatio Alger was taken aback by this show of enthusiasm. He was a shy man, and despite sales of his rag-to-riches books to the tune of more than four million copies, he was not used to being a celebrity.

"I-I just thought I'd stop by and see how my latest book was selling," he began, stammering.

"Like hot cakes! Why, your books sell better than any others I carry. Even when your stories are serialized in Argosy or New York Weekly, we sell out whenever the hard-cover edition is published."

"Er-very good," Horatio stammered. He backed toward the door. "Well, I must be--"

"By the way," the bookseller continued with a wink, "one of my younger customers said to give his regards to Ragged Dick the next time you see him, and ask him when he'll have another adventure for you to write about."

"Er-I'll convey the message." By this time Horatio was perspiring profusely. Couldn't the man see how embarrassed he was?

And Mark the Matchboy, and Tattered Tom--"

"Most certainly. and now, I must be going. The Newsboys' Lodging House--"

"But of course." The bookseller was all smiles and understanding. "Off to gather more material for your books."

Ah-yes"

"Well, Keep them coming, Mr. Alger."

"Most certainly..." he muttered. And he almost ran from the store.

* * *

The Newsboys' Lodging House was located at the corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets in New York City. Under the supervision of Charles 'Connor, it was a haven for homeless boys, without which they would be forced to sleep in doorways, or the sawdust strewn floors of bars-or worse. As it was, the Lodging House was no Taj Mahal, but, for five cents a night, a boy could be assured of a comfortable bunk, and, for a few pennies more, could receive a hot meal. In addition, O'Connor tried subtly to instill good clean, and thrifty habits in the boys who stayed there.

As he entered, Horatio reflected on his greatest success in the fight for the rights of young street arabs [as he called them]. The case dealt with a young Italian immigrant named Filippo, who had been "sold" to an evil padrone by his parents in Calabria and forced to work as a street musician in New York and bring his wages to the don. After his adventures had been fictionalized in "Phil The Fiddler," he and O'Connor had found themselves at the head of a crusade that had led to many needed children's-rights reforms. Horatio still felt good about that victory.

As he pushed open the door and made his way through throngs of happy, laughing boys, he spied his old friend.

"Charles!" he called out.

O'Connor noticed Horatio at once and rushed over to him, his hand extended, but a worried look clouding his usually cheerful face. "Horatio! Darn glad you got here as soon as you did."

"Calm down, Charles. What's the problem?"

"Problem? Catastrophe, more like it. You don't know- You couldn't know what a problem was-is-until you've heard this one."

Horatio was alarmed. His friend was usually calm and collected; he had never seen him this agitated before. "Is something wrong with the boys?"

Well yes and no."

"What do you mean?"

Maybe I'd better let you explain."

"Yes. It's just that--Wait a minute Maybe it'd be better if he explained it to you, himself." He turned, looked around, and spotted a group of boys talking quietly among themselves in a corner. "Hey Johnny!" he shouted in their direction. A dozen heads around the room turned toward O'Connor. As most newsboys at that time were nicknamed "Johnny", the confusion was natural; however, it was not the sort of mistake O'Connor would normally make, and it worried Horatio even further. Finally, O'Connor made it known to which boy he was referring, and he came over to where the men were standing. Placing his hand on the lad's shoulder in a fatherly gesture, the older man said, "Now you know Mr. Alger, don't you, Billy?"

"Why, and it's shur that I do!" he said, his eyes lighting up. Although in this country for five years, his vowels still betrayed him as an Irish immigrant. "Mr. Alger is a bully writer, I'm thinkin'. As do the other boys!"

"Fine, Billy"- for Billy O'Toole was the boy's real name- "Now, why don't you tell our guests just what you told me."

"About the-?"

"Yes. About what you heard at P.T.Barnum's Museum last night. All of it."

* * *

After the boy had been dismissed, a worried Horatio Alger turned to his friend and said, "You-you surely don't believe him, do you Charles? I mean, the story's so farfetched. and after all, he's a boy of only-how old, Charles?"

"Thirteen," O'Connor replied absently. Then, turning his full attention back to Horatio:

"But, Billy's age shouldn't be a factor. If it were only him, I'd dismiss it as the normal product of a boy's imagine. But I've been getting hints and rumors, and rumors and hints about something going on all week. The boys talk frankly among themselves here at the Lodging House, and I overhear much of it. I probably know more about what goes on in the City than the Mayor, himself, just by opening my ears and listening to these lads. They go any where at any time, and who notices?" He continued almost bitterly. "Newsboys, shoeshine boys, baggage smashers. To most of our 'esteemed citizens' they're just part of the scenery, like the statue of George Washington in Central Park. The boys might just as well not be there. And I'll bet there are a few who wish they weren't!"

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"Okay, okay, Charles," Horatio said, "I get your point. But it's still very hard to believe the preposterous tale that Billy told--"

"--Which was backed up by other sources, don't you forget."

Horatio sighed, O'Connor could be stubborn at times. His compassion for the thousands of homeless street urchins could sometimes color his judgement. But he had to admit, the story might just have some basis in fact. "Okay, I believe you--at least to a point. But, you must look at it from my point of view. If I were to ever submit a story like this to my publisher, he'd surely reject it as being much too melodramatic and unbelievable. I mean, who would believe a plot to kidnap General Tom Thumb--the most famous midget in the world--and hold him for ransom. I've never been known for fantastic fiction of that kind. Besides, old P.T. Barnum might have something to say about it!

"Why? Is it any less believable than some of the things we've seen in this century? Our Union almost torn apart by the War Between the States that some are now calling the Civil War? Brother fighting brother? A great President felled by an assassin's bullet? How does Billy's tale match up against those 'fictions'?"

"Okay, I get your point. Anything's possible, I guess." A thought struck Horatio. "You don't think it's Confederates, do you? Southerners who believe the fight should continue, even years later?"

"I have no idea," O'Connor replied. "All I know is what Billy told me: He heard two men discussing a plan to kidnap General Thumb from his home in Bridgeport, Connecticut."

"No other details?"

"Only what he told you. That the ransom is to be in the neighborhood of twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Quite a bit, by any standard."

"Old Barnum would be willing to pay twice that sum. even though his star attraction has been retired these past few years."

"So, assuming that the story's true"--he saw the look on O'Connor's face--"and I'm sure that it is, what can we do about it?"

O'Connor thought for a moment. "I'm not certain, but I do have the glimmering of a plan."

"Which is--?"

"I think that you and some of your boys--"

"Which boys?--"

"Oh, I suppose Dick and Phil, and, perhaps, Paul--" Horatio groaned quietly--"and, maybe, Jane--"

"Jane!"

"Yes, Jane! Maybe, you could all join forces and solve this mystery together."

"What about the police?"

"Do you think they'd believe me? They think I'm muddled already, taking in all of these homeless boys and helping them find a better life."

"True," Horatio reluctantly agreed, "the police would probably have little sympathy." Then another thought struck him. "I don't know that the boys--and Jane--would agree, though. When I told their stories in *Ragged Dick*, *Paul the Peddler*, and *Phil the Fiddler*--O'Connor shot a look at him--"oh, okay, and *Tattered Tom*--although I don't see why you would want to drag Jane into this--"

"Because she's a master of disguise, that's why. After all, for years she had everybody--even you!--convinced that she was Tattered Tom, a boy--not a girl." "Granted. But still, when I wrote the stories I agreed that I would present them as works of fiction and that went for the characters, too."

"The public need never know about any of this. They can continue to believe that Ragged Dick and Paul the Peddler and the others are just products of your imagination."

"Hmmm. It might work, at that...."

"Then you agree?"

"I'll have to get the children together and talk it over with them. I haven't seen them in a while, and it will be nice for all of us to get together again."

* * *

There was none of the resistance he'd expected, and Horatio was worried. He'd been certain, earlier, that none of his young friends would go along with the crazy scheme; but here they were--Dick, Paul, Phil and Jane--accepting the story and agreeing to help.

"One thing I'm not sure I understand, Mr. Alger," Dick was saying, "Is how young Billy found out about it to begin with?"

Horatio looked with approval and deep affection at the young man who had been Ragged Dick, once a homeless "vagabone" of the streets who had more than lived up to the nickname. Since obtaining--after many adventures--a job as bookkeeper in a well-known counting house, he had grown in many ways toward his future fame and fortune. Moreover, Horatio still had a special place in his heart for young Richard Hunter--as Dick was now known--because it was Ragged Dick that had been his first successful rags-to-riches novel.

"As the story was first told to me, Dick," Horatio explained, "Billy had gone to P.T. Barnum's Museum--" "With oddities and curios too numerous to mention," quoted Paul, a smile on his face.

"Hmmm--yes. You used to go there quite a lot, didn't you?"

"We all did--" answered Jane.

"--before we learned that it was better to save our money--" Dick continued.

"--and try to rise in the world," Phil finished up. The young musician absently fingered the neck of the worn violin that was never far from his side. It had sustained him many times in the past--from the money he had earned playing on street corners--and now its sweet music sustained him in other ways. It was an old friend, from which he would never willingly part.

"Anyway," Horatio continued, "Billy had fallen asleep in one of the balcony seats, and when he woke up, he heard two men talking in the row behind him. I assume they didn't notice him, as he is small and hunched down, besides.

"He wasn't able to hear all of the conversation, you understand, but enough to realize that there was a plot to kidnap General Thumb out from under the noses of the Bridgeport police and his wife Lavinia."

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Dick asked, "And Billy has no idea of how, when, or where?"

"Not a notion, Dick."

"So, where do we begin, fellows?-I include you, too, Jane." Dick asked the group.

Phil was the first to respond. I suggest that we start at the Barnum Museum. After all, that's where Billy heard the two men, and perhaps someone there will remember them and give us a clue as to who they are."

"Sounds like a good idea to me," said Paul.

"I agree," said Jane.

"Passed!" said Dick, who, by unspoken agreement, was designated the leader of the small band.

"I still don't understand why you're all willing to help Mr. O'Connor and me like this," Horatio said.

"Because it sounds like fun-" Phil answered.

"-and because Tom Thumb is one of our favorites-" Jane continued.

"-and they sound like evil men-" Paul said.

"-but most of all," Dick finished up, "because of you and Mr. O'Connor." The group fell silent. "If it wasn't for the two of you, I for one, would still be 'Ragged Dick', friendless, penniless, and out on the streets, with very bleak prospects for the future."

"And I wouldn't have my own shop. I'd be selling neckties from a stand in the street-in all kinds of weather-and earning barely enough to support my mother and me," Paul said.

"I'd most likely be dead by now," Phil continued, soberly. The padrone was known to have murdered more than one boy who had been unfortunate enough to not bring in enough money to support his vile habits.

"And I needn't tell you, MR. Alger," said Jane, "what my future would have been like-" Horatio shuddered. All of his young friend had come so close to disaster and depravation, but none more than Jane. "Please Jane, no need to continue.

"I really am proud of all of you; and I'm sure that Mr. O'Connor will be also, when I tell him." He sat up straight in his chair and looked at the group.

"Okay then," he asked. "Where to first?"

With absolutely no hesitation, "To P.T. Barnum's!" they sang out in chorus.

* * *

Making their way down Broadway toward the museum-more of a circus, really-Horatio and his band resembled a doting father out for a stroll with his brood. And that was how he often felt. He looked upon his charges not so much as friends, but more as sons and daughter. They were young enough-Phil and Paul each fourteen, Jane fifteen, and Dick a mature sixteen-that they could easily have been his children. He was only forty-two. As it was, the group received many approving glances from passers-by, impressed at so attractive and well-mannered a family. In fact they all decided that was to be their cover: a family out for a day's amusement, nothing more. They were taking no chances.

P.T. Barnum's Museum, which housed-by its own estimation-over 200,000 exhibits and curiosities, was a favorite for tourists and residents alike as a major New York City attraction.

Every year hundreds of thousands of visitors would invade its halls to view such oddities as the bearded lady, wax figures of the famous and infamous, Jumbo the Elephant, and of course, mid-gets, of whom General Thumb had been the most famous.

Paying the twenty-cents-each admission, Horatio led his band inside. The smell of damp straw and alien fauna was everywhere. To the youngsters it was as exotic as anything they'd ever experienced.

"Can't we look at some of the exhibits before we go into the theater?" Dick inquired.

"Yes, please?" echoed the others.

Horatio looked embarrassed. "Oh, okay," he answered a small smile creasing the corners of his mouth beneath his thick mustache. He vividly remembered his own childhood and how much a visit to Barnum's Museum had meant to him then. "Go ahead, but don't wander too far. In the meantime, I'll do some checking on my own."

"Can't you come with us?" asked Paul.

"No, I'm afraid not. Out task is too important to waste any time."

Jane looked at the others sheepishly. "Don't you think we owe it to Mr. Alger and Mr. O'Connor to put aside our own interests and help solve the mystery?" her voice rising in indignation. "After all, we're here for an important purpose, not for enjoyment."

"Well, maybe you're right, Jane." said Paul after a moment. Then to the others: "I think Jane's got a point, don't you fellows?"

"I guess so," the others admitted.

Dick made his decision. "Okay, then. Let's follow Mr. Alger. "The game's afoot!" as Sherlock Holmes would say. It's time we got on with it!"

* * *

As they walked past the exhibits toward the theater, Horatio remarked to Dick, "I didn't know you read Arthur Conan Doyle's mysteries, Dick."

"Who?" asked that young man perplexed.

"Arthur Copnan Doyle-The man who writes the Sherlock Holmes stories. I was sure from your statement that you'd been following their serialization in the Sun."

"Do you mean they're not real?" Dick inquired, shocked. "I thought for certain that they were. Does that mean that there's no Dr. Watson either?"

"Sorry, Dick, but they're just fictional characters created out of an author's imagination."

"Fancy that," replied Ragged Dick.

Part 2

Horatio led his group through the labyrinthine corridors of the Barnum Museum, past stalls, booths, and platforms containing such wonders as the *Feejee Mermaid*, the *Albino Lady*, the *Living Skeleton*, and *Gen. Washington's Nurse*. In spite of his best efforts, Horatio's charges were inclined to stop and gawk at the many exhibits and curiosities, often unintentionally wandering away from their mentor. At one point he had to follow them into a room with a sign reading **T. Edison-Inventions** and had to almost physically drag them from the room and its strange machines.

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At last, however, they came to the theater. Horatio spoke softly to an usher there after signaling the others to stay back. After perhaps fifteen minutes of conversation, he returned to the group and spoke to them all.

"Mr. Benton-the usher-says he thinks he remembers the men we're looking for. There are not too many bearded individuals who frequent the Museum Theater in tandem-and one other bit of evidence seems to single them out."

"What's that?" asked Paul.

"On the night that Billy says he visited here, Mr. Benton distinctly remembers seeing a small boy who had fallen asleep in one of the seats."

"Billy did say that he had fallen asleep," Jane said excitedly.

"Yes, that is one more piece of corroborating evidence."

Hmmm..."Dick said thoughtfully. "Does the usher know who the men might be?"

"Well," Horatio answered, "If they are the men he is thinking of, then they come here once a week or so."

"Ha!" cried Phil. "And does he know their names?"

"Not their names." Their faces fell. "But he believes he knows where they go for relaxation!"

"Far out!" cried Dick.

"What?" Horatio asked.

Dick looked sheepishly at the others before answering.

"Hmmm. Nothing, Mr. Alger. It's just an expression I picked up somewhere. It means, I believe, 'very interesting'."

The answer seemed to satisfy Horatio, and he continued, "Anyway, Mr. Benton thinks they frequent the New York Public Library."

"Okey, then! Let's go!" the group cried in unison.

"What! Just like this?" Horatio asked.

Dick answered. "Sure. The faster we make tracks, the sooner we shall solve the mystery."

"Really, Dick," Horatio admonished, "I don't know what to do about your language. Now, what do you mean by 'make tracks'?"

Before Dick had a chance to answer, Jane broke in. "If we're to reach the Library before it closes shouldn't we leave now?"

At once the others piped in, shouting their concurrence after a moment, Horatio was forced to agree with them. But all the way out, he cast curious glances at Dick, who appeared not to notice them.

* * *

Upon reaching the street, the group turned north toward the Library. As they continued up the street, Dick had a thought. "Mr. Alger," he said, "something just occurred to me. As you know, both my roommate and I visit the Library very frequently. "So?" Horatio asked.

"So, in the many times I've been there, I never seen two men of the description Billy supplied." "So,

what do you think?" Paul asked. Addressing himself to Horatio, Dick asked, "Did Mr. Benton specifically mention the New York Public Library, or did he just say 'library'?" "Why-the latter, I believe." He thought for a moment, trying to remember. "Yes, now that I think about it. I've seen them at the library," is what he said."

"In that case," Dick said triumphantly, "I suggest that we use logic and our powers of deductive reasoning."

"More of Mr. Holmes, Dick?" Horatio asked.

"Elementary, Mr. Alger," Dick replied, smiling.

"We place ourselves in your capable hands," Horatio replied in the same spirit. "Where to now, Mr. Scientific Detective?"

"Well," Dick said thoughtfully, "if we examine Mr. Benton's statement closely, we will notice that he has 'seen them at the library,' implying that he'd seen them on more than one occasion. That, in turn, implies a location closer than the New York Public Library."

"Very good," Jane said admiringly.

"Simple ratiocination, my dear," Dick said, stumbling over the word.

"Which is the library you believe to be the most likely, Dick?" asked Paul.

"Huh? Oh, let me think..." His brow wrinkled. Then his eyes lit up. "I've got it! It must be the Mercantile Library on Eighth Street, in the Clinton Building!"

"Are you sure, Dick?" Horatio asked.

"No," he admitted sheepishly. "But I think so."

"Well," Horatio said, "at least we can try there first."

* * *

The reading room of the Mercantile Library was poorly lit. The yellow light given off by dim gas-lamps was not great, but it appeared to be adequate for those reading by the lamps. Sitting either in hard-backed chairs facing long, wooden tables, or in comfortable, but worn, easy chairs, they seemed oblivious to all but their books. While most of the readers were elderly, a few younger people could be seen. Probably they were there to further their education in the hopes of rising in their chosen professions.

As Horatio and the others entered the room, none of the readers looked up. Warning the youngsters that they should keep quiet, Horatio scanned the room.

"Do you see anybody who fits the description?" he whispered.

"Not yet," Dick answered in kind "But our eyes haven't adjusted to the dark yet, and there are other rooms to search besides this one."

"Let's try the periodical room," Jane suggested.

"Okay, Jane," Horatio agreed. He led the gang through a door on the far side of the room. As he crossed the doorway, he stopped short, causing the others to bump into him, and creating general confusion.

"Shhh!" he said, trying to quiet the bunch. "I think I see two men matching the description. There, see them?"

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He pointed to two ancient men in dark coats, sitting at one of the tables. They appeared to be between 60 and 70 years old-although they could have been much older than that- and were dressed in a manner in no way unique to that time and place.

"They certainly seem sinister to me," whispered Jane.

"-As if they'd be capable of anything-" added Phil. "-and they have beards, all right," Paul finished.

"Let's confront them!" suggested Dick excitedly, flushed with the apparent success of his first venture into the realm of "scientific investigation."

"Wait! If we accuse them, all they would have to do is deny everything."

"Then what can we do?"

"Hmmm...Let me think. 'I've got it!' He exclaimed after a moment. "We'll just continue what we're doing now." Seeing the questioning looks on the faces of his young friends, he explained, "We're supposed to be a family, right? Okay, then we'll just take over the table behind them-en famille, so to speak- and while we're pretending to be reading Argosy and the like, we'll keep a sharp ear tuned to their conversation."

There was general agreement with this plan, so, after selecting magazines from the display racks, they settled themselves at the table nearest the suspects. At once, Horatio's prediction proved accurate, and they were able to make out bits of conversation.

"...ol' Jeff Davis, and for the mem'ry of the South! Honor demands that we must pull it off." Horatio heard the first man whisper to his companion.

"The South shall rise again!" ejaculated his companion, sotto voce.

Horatio and the others remained silent during this exchange, seemingly intent upon reading their magazines. But they heard every word. Unreconstructed Southerners, Horatio thought to himself, wondering if the same thought had occurred to the others. *They'd fight the whole bloody Civil War all over again if they could.* Although the thought filled him with dismay, there still hadn't been anything said to connect them with the alleged conspiracy. In a moment, however, all his doubts were dispelled as the first man continued with a question of his companion.

"Do you think ol' Barnum will come up with the stamps? After all twenty-five thousand is a pow'ful lot o' money. Why in the world should he spring for buyin' back a dwarf that don't even work for him no more?"

"P.T.'s got a streak o' loyalty in 'im that would do a South'ner proud. The Gen'l made the ol' humbug a pile o' stamps in his prime, an' he ain't about to forget. Besides, how would it look? That fool Yankee cares more for his reputation than anything else. 'Pride goeth before a fall,' as the Scripture says. He'll come up with the spondulicks, all right Homer."

"Whatever you say, Zeb."

"That's right, Homer!"

* * *

As Horatio and his friends continued eavesdropping on Zeb and Homer, their unease grew. The tale, which had seemed Sunday-supplement fare in the beginning, had begun to assume an ominous reality.

Horatio made a decision. Signaling with his eyes for the others to follow him, he got up, replaced the magazine he'd been reading, and left the periodical room. Once outside, he silently gathered the others around him, and when he spoke it was in a whisper.

"well," he began in a grim voice, "It seems that young Billy was not the victim of an overactive imagination after all. A plot exists, all right. The question now is, should we inform the authorities?"

"No!" Dick exclaimed, apparently speaking for all of them. A look of quiet determination was on each young face. As Horatio glanced from one to the other, he felt a glow of pride-and also a twinge of fear. He was proud of these youngsters whom he had guided thus far on the road of life-but were they taking too much on their youthful shoulders? He decided to play devil's advocate, to see just how deep their commitment lay.

"Why not go to the police, Dick? They are, I should think, admirably equipped to handle such a situation as this. Isn't the prevention of crime their province?"

Dick appeared speechless, as if the answer was obvious. Jane spoke up.

"Oh, I guess the coppers do their job all right," she began, "but you, of all people, know what they think of us, the boys and girls of the City? They treat us as if we weren't there. 'Children should be seen and not heard'. How many times has each of us heard that one? They don't seem to take a person seriously unless he has a bald head, muttonchop whiskers, and a vest two sizes too small for his corpulent belly!-"

"-or unless he's a rich man's son, with a fancy cravat and kid gloves!" added Phil, increasing the list of grievances against the police.

"You'd never catch me in kid gloves," Dick muttered. The others all knew of his aversion to that particular affectation of the idle rich.

"Okay then: No policemen-or coppers, as you call them. That leaves us, doesn't it? But do you really understand how dangerous this undertaking might be? These men are not the impotent squires of my novels. These are desperate men, determined to continue the Civil War to-they believe-final victory for the South. President Lincoln was assassinated by such as these, was he not? Arn't you afraid?"

The group waited several minutes before silently signalling Dick to once again answer for all of them. "Hey, we're the good guys, remember? We wear the white hats. I say we go for it!"

The others nodded in agreement.

"Dick I can't say I'm very impressed by your language these days, but, as you say, 'let's go for it!'" The others hastily agreed.

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