



# 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.

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NUMBER 4

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did Horatio Alger  
really earn?



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## President's column

Good day to everyone! I sincerely hope that you have enjoyed your summer, as it is almost over. As usual, Jeanette and I have been busy this summer, and we just came back from an emergency trip to New Hampshire. My cousin was in the hospital and she has cancer. We went out to see her and try to help her husband with getting a bed in the home, etc. to try and make her a little more comfortable. She is doing as well as can be expected. Her husband of some 53 years is having a tough time!

On a brighter note, everyone else here is doing well, including our two ladies. Of course, we are busy with them, having to take them to the doctors, pills, groceries etc, and whatever their needs might be. It keeps us hopping most of the time.

Jeanette is getting ready for her Fall classes at the school and has been spending a lot of time trying to get her classrooms ready and her lesson plans ready. This year has been especially tough, as the amount of room space is at a premium and of course, the high school classes come first. They are in the process of building a new school, but it hasn't been completed yet so everyone is having to adjust to the lack of space. She has been working very hard this summer on her flower beds and they are really looking good. It is a never-ending task to keep the weeds out of them. Hopefully soon, she won't be working and she can spend her time on her flower beds and whatever else she would like to do, including her music. She is traveling to a town called Midland this week for a "jam session" with the Dulcimer folks. She is really doing good with her Dulcimer and really enjoys it.

I am just trying to get things done around the house before winter sets in, and for some reason, it seems to be interfering with my golf! I can't seem to get out on the golf course enough! The other problem is, our bowling season is starting in a couple of weeks and I need to do a little practicing before we start. Just like the sports on the TV, they seem to overlap far too much!!

There's not much of anything good on the Internet to buy! Has anyone out there found anything good lately? Remember, if you find something special, please share it with the Society at our next convention, which is coming up April 27-30, 2006, in Omaha, Nebraska.

Also, if you are selling books or there is a book that you are wanting to purchase, please send a note to Bill Gowen so that he can place your wants in **Newsboy**. In addition to ads, Bill is always looking for articles to place

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## 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 — youngsters whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and inspired hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans for generations to come.*

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# How much money did Horatio Alger really earn?

By Robert E. Kasper (PF-327)

The Lancaster County Historical Society, located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has a large file of correspondence and publishing agreements between Horatio Alger, Jr. and some of his publishers. The publishers include A. K. Loring, Porter & Coates and Henry T. Coates. It is not known who donated these items to the society or how they came into the possession of the donor. Almost all of Alger's correspondence relates to royalty payments and sales of his books.

Frank Gruber was the first bibliographer to opine on Horatio Alger's income as an author. In fact, he devoted an entire chapter on this topic in his 1961 biography and bibliography.<sup>1</sup> But Gruber's estimates regarding Alger's earnings appear speculative and based more on hyperbole than fact.

While acknowledging the lack of financial records on Alger's earnings, Gruber compares and extrapolates known information regarding the royalties of one of Alger's contemporaries, Harry Castlemon. For example, Gruber writes that "every single book was a tremendous seller and earned Alger vast sums of money. If Harry Castlemon got \$1,000 for a book, Alger must have gotten five thousand. And if Castlemon got \$100 for the serial rights to a story, Alger got no less than \$500 and possibly twice as much."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Gruber provides no corroboration or documentation for these statements.

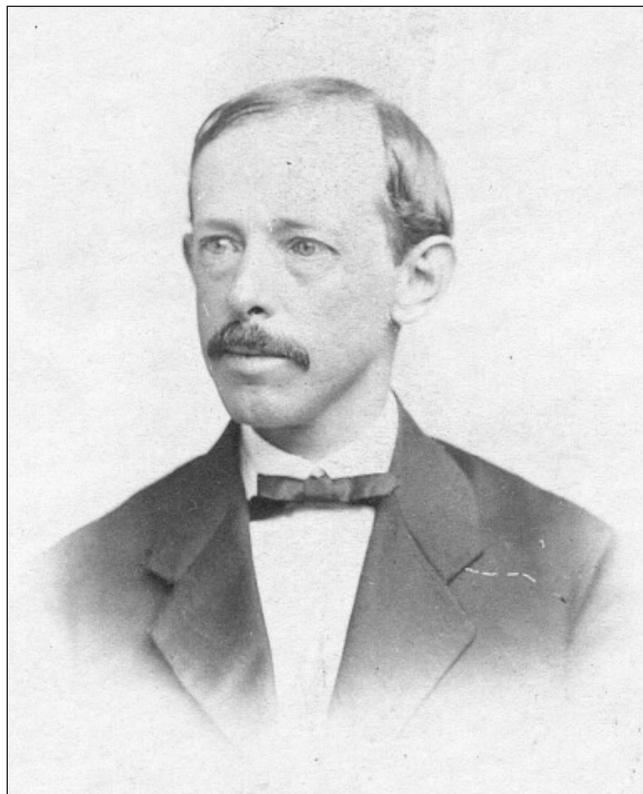
In another section of the chapter, Gruber states that "a conservative estimate of his earnings would be an average of \$20,000 a year — comparable to \$150,000 a year today [in 1961]."<sup>3</sup> Again, Gruber provides no evidence or proof for these numbers.

Gruber was correct about one thing though — if Alger kept any financial records or ledgers they are long gone. Alger lived during a time when there was no income tax (except for a brief period during the Civil War) and if he kept any records they were for his own use. But, fortunately, some correspondence between Alger and his publishers regarding royalty payments do exist. In addition, several contracts between Alger and his publishers, A. K. Loring and Porter and Coates, have come to light.

The earliest existing agreement between Alger and Loring is shown in Example 2. This one-page handwritten contract reads in full as follows:

*Agreement between Horatio Alger, Jr. on the one part and A. K. Loring on the other.*

*Said Horatio Alger, Jr. agrees to furnish the original matter for a series of six volumes to be called "The Luck and Pluck Series."*



**Ex. 1: Horatio Alger, Jr. in 1867. This *carte de visite* was presented to subscribers of the *Student & Schoolmate* as a premium. Alger's eighth book, *Ragged Dick*, was serialized in this monthly publication in 1867.**

*Said A. K. Loring agrees to publish the same, assuming all expenses, and pay to said Alger a copyright of Twelve and one half cents on each and every volume sold. Copies given to newspapers exempt from copyright.*

*Settlements to be made in April and October of each year.*

Horatio Alger, Jr.  
A. K. Loring

Another agreement between Alger and Loring (Ex. 3), also handwritten, reads as follows:  
*Agreement between Horatio Alger, Jr. on the one part and A. K. Loring on the other.*

*Said Horatio Alger, Jr. has furnished the original matter for three volumes called "The Campaign Series."*

*Said Horatio Alger, Jr. has furnished the original matter for six volumes called "The Ragged Dick Series."*

*Said Horatio Alger, Jr. agrees to furnish the original matter for six volumes the size of "Ragged Dick Series" to be called*

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Editor's notebook

During the editing of this issue's second installment of our tribute to Ralph Gardner, a series of four articles we are calling "Ralph in his Own Words," the piece he did on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edward Stratemeyer's birth was quite interesting in that it included several facts that Ralph and his sources considered true at the time but which have not stood the test of time in the 18 years since. Rather than update all this information, I decided to run the article as written with a few minor changes and editing for style.

The statement that attracted attention at first reading was the sentence that began: "Edward Stratemeyer's daughter, the late Harriet Adams — who became famous as Carolyn Keene, author of the Nancy Drew series ..."

Mrs. Adams claimed authorship of Nancy Drew to the very end, and she was telling the truth in a manner of speaking. Adams was heavily involved with the outlines, editing and the 1960s re-writes — *and*, she authored most of the Drews published from 1955-79. However, Mildred Wirt Benson wrote all but three of the first 25 titles. Wirt Benson's authorship became public record during the Grosset & Dunlap-Simon & Schuster civil trial over publication rights to Syndicate series.

I left the sentence as written, and added the Mildred Wirt Benson information in a note at the foot of the page. In general, you should read Ralph's article in the context of the year it was published. For more about Edward Stratemeyer and his syndicate, I highly recommend any of the articles and books by John T. Dizer (PF-511) and Deidre Johnson (PF-596); or visit James D. Keeline's Web site, [www.keeline.com](http://www.keeline.com), and click on the Stratemeyer links.

Incidentally, yet another "Ralph in his Own Words" article will appear in the September-October *Newsboy*. This one is titled "Here are the Rarest of the Fabulous Algers," and was published in the June 1968 issue of *The Antiques Journal*.

Back to Edward Stratemeyer — one of the most fascinating areas of study is the group of Stratemeyer serial stories first published in book form by Allison in 1897 as the **Bound to Win Series**. These 12 books include four under Stratemeyer's name and four each under his personal pseudonyms "Arthur M. Winfield" and "Capt. Ralph Bonehill." Dizer has discussed this subject in two excellent articles for *Newsboy*.

The first came in the March-April 1993 issue and was titled "How Tom and Franklin got from Allison to Lee and

*(Continued on Page 18)*

## President's column

*(Continued from Page 2)*

in *Newsboy*. Please e-mail him with your story ideas at [www.hasnewsboy@aol.com](mailto:www.hasnewsboy@aol.com).

With that, I will close for now and wish everyone a safe and enjoyable Labor Day!

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**Robert L. Kersch**  
**5 Leaside Drive**  
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## How much money did Horatio Alger really earn?

(Continued from Page 3)  
"Tattered Tom Series."

Said A. K. Loring agrees to publish the same, assuming all expenses and pay to said Horatio Alger, Jr. a copyright of Ten cents on each and every volume sold. Copies given to the newspaper press exempt from copyright.

Settlements to be made in April and October of each year.

A.K. Loring

Horatio Alger, Jr.

Both agreements are undated, although both contain an Internal Revenue stamp from August 10, 1870. Since *Luck and Pluck* (the first book from the eight-volume **Luck and Pluck Series**) was available by Christmas 1869, one could assume that the agreement was executed sometime in mid to late 1869.

The agreement for the **Tattered Tom Series** was probably executed in mid 1870, certainly no later than August 10<sup>th</sup> of that year. The first volume from this series (*Tattered Tom*) was published in June 1871.

It is interesting to note the difference in price between the two agreements (two and one-half cents per book). Although Alger was probably initially paid the customary copyright of ten percent of the retail price (books from the **Campaign Series** and **Ragged Dick Series** sold at \$1.25 retail, hence the twelve and one-half cent per book royalty payment), it didn't last long.

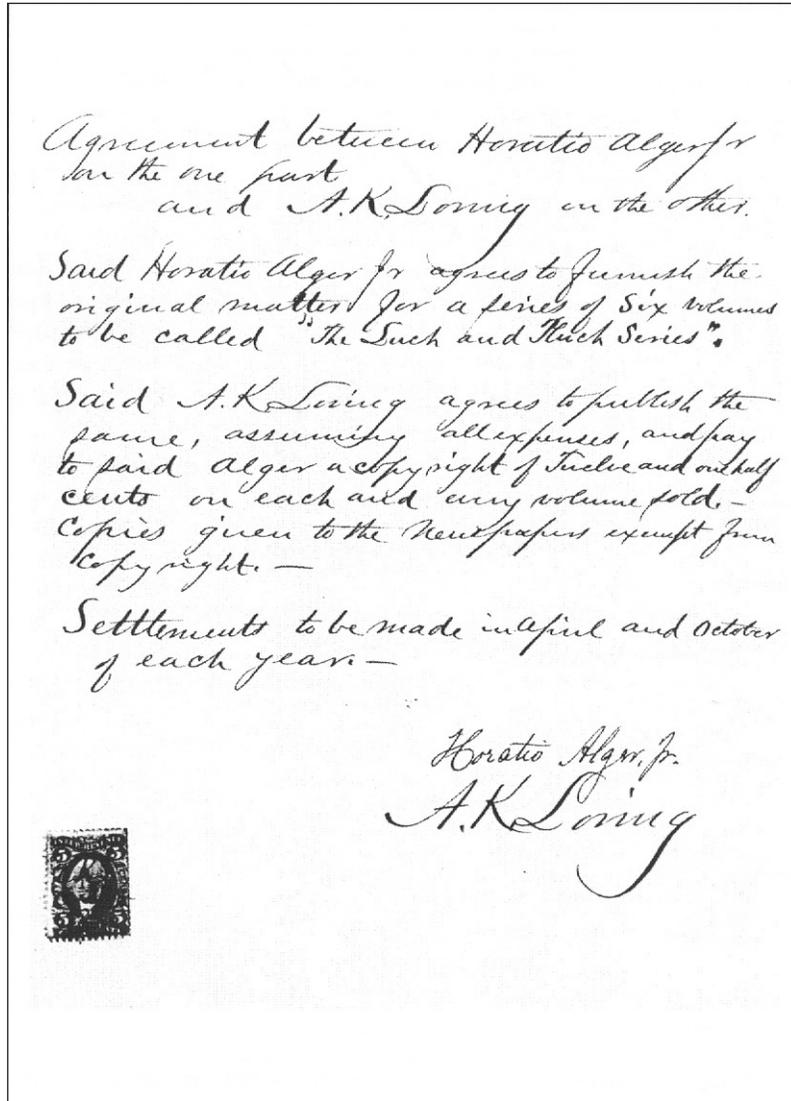
Individual books from the **Tattered Tom Series** also sold for \$1.25, but Alger's royalties were ten cents per book, effectively reducing his copyright to eight percent.

Loring increased the retail price of titles from the **Luck and Pluck Series** to \$1.50 each, but at a copyright of twelve and one-half cents Alger was still getting only about eight percent. This reduction seems odd, since Alger presumably had been at the pinnacle of his earning power and book sales during the early 1870s.

Alger once wrote in a letter to a friend that his sales of *Paul Prescott's Charge* (his fourth book and second by Loring) amounted to 2,000 copies each in the first and second printings. If Loring had paid Alger twelve and one-half cents for that title, Alger would have received \$500 for those two events. Unfortunately, any business documents or sales records that Loring may have kept have also disappeared, so it's difficult to accurately determine the amount of royalty payments that Alger received from his 37 books published by Loring.

Gary Scharnhorst, in his Twayne's United States authors series on Horatio Alger, states that "in 1897 Alger himself estimated his aggregate sales of all volumes at only about 800,000. Sales of the six volumes in the early "Ragged Dick series" contribute a disproportionate share to this total, for Alger also estimated in 1888 that total sales of single books in this series amounted to about 150,000."<sup>4</sup>

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Courtesy of Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**Ex. 2: Contract between Alger and his publisher, A. K. Loring for six volumes of the *Luck and Pluck Series*. Note that Alger was paid twelve and one-half cents for each book sold.**

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## How much money did Horatio Alger really earn?

(Continued from Page 3)

Assuming these numbers are accurate, and also assuming that Alger received an average of ten cents for each book published, his income for the thirty-year period ending in 1897 would have been approximately \$80,000. That calculates to nearly \$2,700 per year, a modest, if not comfortable amount. This total does not include the sale of any serial stories (which were numerous), income from tutoring young students, and any monies received from business investments, in which Alger had several. Compare this with Alger's ministerial salary of \$800 per year (in 1864) at the First Unitarian Church and Society in Brewster, Massachusetts.<sup>5</sup>

The historical society also has in its files the agreement between Alger and Porter & Coates of Philadelphia for the publication of *Ben's Nugget* (see Ex. 4). This contract, dated May 27, 1882, was Alger's first book with this publisher. Porter & Coates published 15 new books by Alger between 1882 and 1895 and reissued most of the titles published by Loring.

Note that Alger's copyright payment was eight cents per copy for this title, more than 35 per cent less

than what Loring had paid for titles from the **Luck and Pluck Series** in 1870.

Perhaps Alger was not concerned with steadily declining per book copyright payments if his sales were increasing or at least stable. Or maybe Alger was a poor negotiator and accepted whatever publishers offered him.

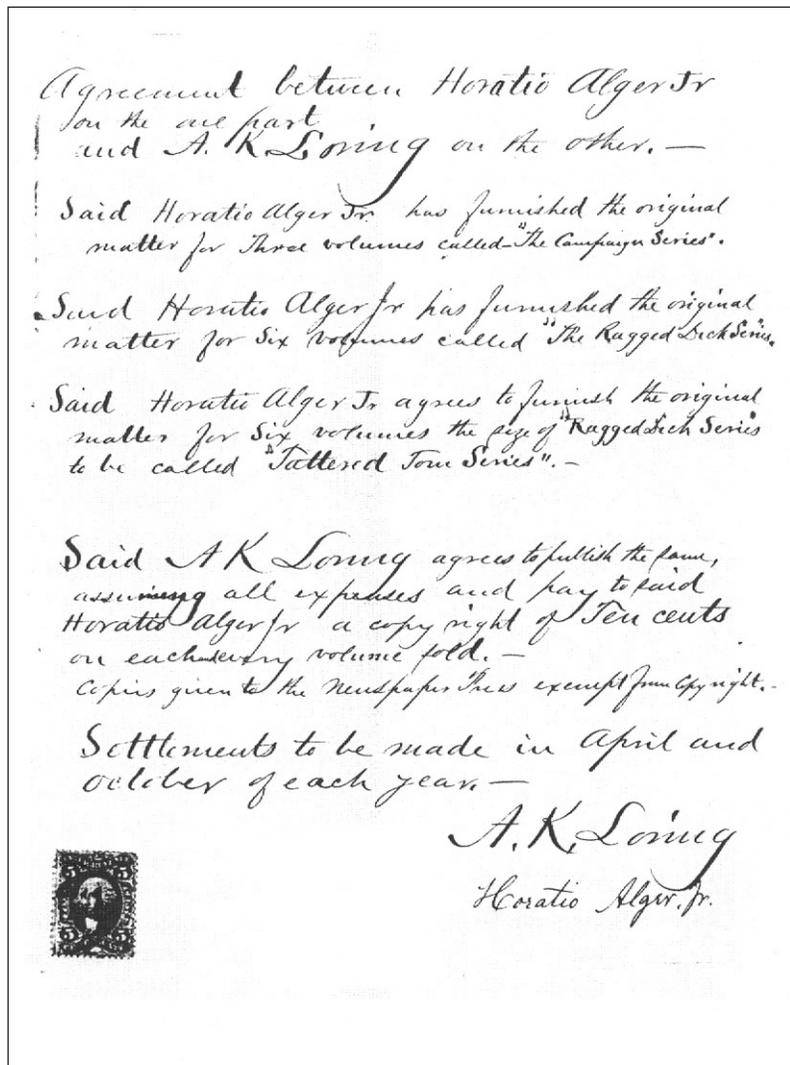
I'm inclined to believe the latter based upon Porter & Coates' contracts with other authors found in the archives of the historical society. Three such contracts with

Margaret Vandergrift (for *The Queen's Body Guard*, dated December 7, 1883, *Doris and Theidora*, dated October 23, 1884 and *Ways and Means*, dated January 4, 1886) all provided copyright payments of twelve cents per book.

As Alger was approaching 40 published books around this time, the copyright payments on all of these titles may have been sufficient for his needs. His income from serializations for the period of 1867-1872 was estimated by Scharnhorst to be about \$350 per year.<sup>6</sup> And Alger had a reasonably steady income from tutoring (most notably for the five sons of Joseph Seligman, in addition to other pupils) that supplemented his royalty income.

As Alger reached his 60s with diminished literary output and declining book sales, his income was correspond-

ingly reduced as evidenced by numerous letters to publishers and others. In one stern letter dated February 21, 1898, to the Henry T. Coates Company,



Courtesy of Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**Ex. 3: Contract between Alger and Loring for six volumes of the *Tattered Tom Series*. Alger's copyright royalties were reduced to ten cents for each book sold in this agreement. This contract was assigned to Porter & Coates on October 20, 1881 after Loring went bankrupt.**

his primary publisher at that time, Alger writes in part:

*I find that my payments on royalties have been:*

Jan. 1896 — \$1058.48

Jan. 1897 — \$819.92

Jan. 1898 — \$681.84

*You can judge for yourself whether this is satisfactory. Will you kindly inform me why your firm has allowed my sales and royalties to fall off in this remarkable way. I do not find that [his] other publishers have dropped in the same way.*

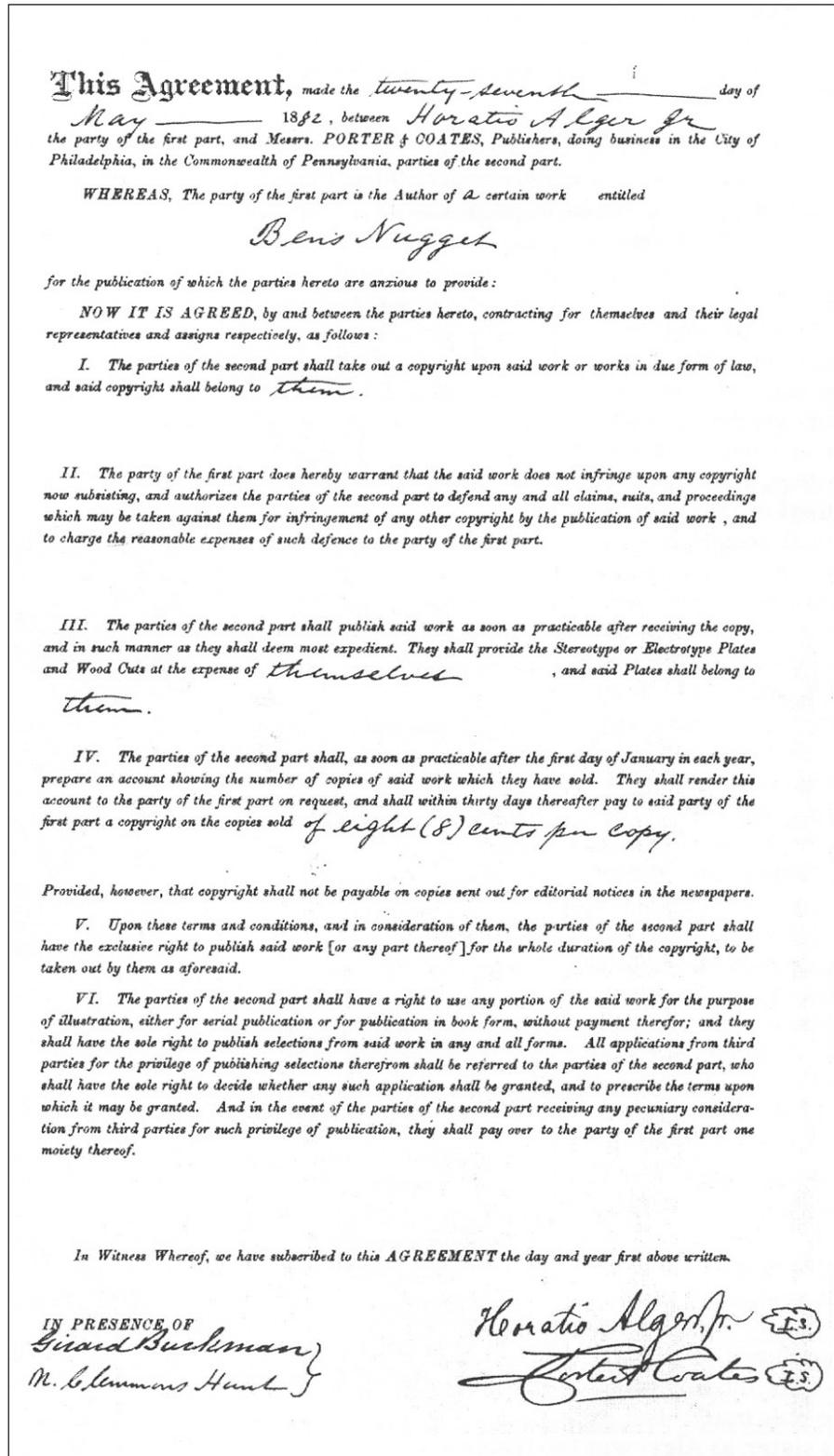
In another letter to Coates dated July 24, 1896, Alger acknowledges the receipt of \$374.72 for royalties earned between January 1 and July 1 of that year. However meager his royalties were, Alger was anxious to receive them as indicated in the 1896 letter to Coates in Example 5. Here Alger makes an appointment for January 18<sup>th</sup> to get a "statement and check" and requests \$100 "on account."

Alger received royalty payments from Coates every January and July based upon sales for the previous six months. If Alger received eight cents per book in copyright payments, then \$681.84 would approximate to sales of 8,523 books in 1897. That would likely include all of the titles published by Coates at the time (about 50 titles) but, of course, exclude royalties from his other publishers, most notably the Penn Publishing Company.

Perhaps sensing that his book sales were to decline even further, Alger made a new arrangement with Coates to sell some of his old *Argosy* serial stories for a flat \$500. In a letter dated February 24, 1899, Alger writes to Coates and provides a receipt in the amount of \$1,000 for "payment in full" for *Chester Rand* and *Andy Grant's Pluck* purchased the previous year. Five Hundred Dollars was paid in April 1898 and the balance was paid in installments between October and December 1898.

This arrangement was separate

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Courtesy of Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**Ex. 4: Agreement between Alger and Porter & Coates for *Ben's Nugget*, his first book by this publisher. Porter & Coates acquired Alger's contracts after the demise of Loring in 1881.**

## How much money did Horatio Alger really earn?

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from the semi-annual copyright payments Alger received on all of his other books in print. Coates eventually published *Andy Grant's Pluck* in 1902 and *Chester Rand* in 1903.

Alger probably initiated this arrangement soon after Henry Coates took over the firm of Porter & Coates after his partner, Robert Porter, retired in 1895. The historical society has numerous receipts and letters from Alger to Coates regarding royalties. In a receipt dated April 11, 1896, Alger acknowledges "payment in full" of \$500 for *The Young Salesman*. In another receipt dated October 1897, Alger received \$500 for *The Young Bank Messenger* and in a letter dated November 11, 1897, Alger received \$500 in advance for a "full book." The latter was most likely for *A Boy's Fortune*, which Coates published in 1898.

As Alger's health worsened, he moved to Natick, Massachusetts in 1896 to live with his sister, Augusta, and her husband, Amos Cheney. Most of Alger's correspondence during the last six months of his life was transcribed by his sister, as Alger was too feeble to write but for an occasional signature.

In one letter to Coates, dated April 10, 1899, Augusta writes to request the return of six stories (*Tom Turner's Legacy*, *A Debt of Honor*, *The Island Treasure*, *Work and*

*Win*, *The Hermit's Heir* and *Gerald's Mission*) that were rejected by Coates for publication.

The A. L. Burt Company eventually published the first five titles in book form in the early 1900s. *The Island Treasure* was issued as *In Search of Treasure*, *Work and Win* was issued as *Wait and Win* and *The Hermit's Heir* was issued as *Mark Manning's Mission*. The Penn Publishing Company published *Gerald's Mission* as *Making His Mark* in 1901.

Although Alger continued to write part-time after moving to Natick, he was compelled to live on a reduced income from lower book sales. Alger once estimated that he earned \$100,000 from writing during his residence in New York City,<sup>7</sup> but his income after 1896 probably never exceeded \$2,000 in any one year.

### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Heather Tennes, Archivist at the Lancaster County Historical Society, who provided access to the Horatio Alger, Jr. collection and answered my numerous questions.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Frank Gruber, *Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Biography and Bibliography*. Los Angeles: Grover Jones Press, 1961, pp. 38-43.

<sup>2</sup> Gruber, p. 41.

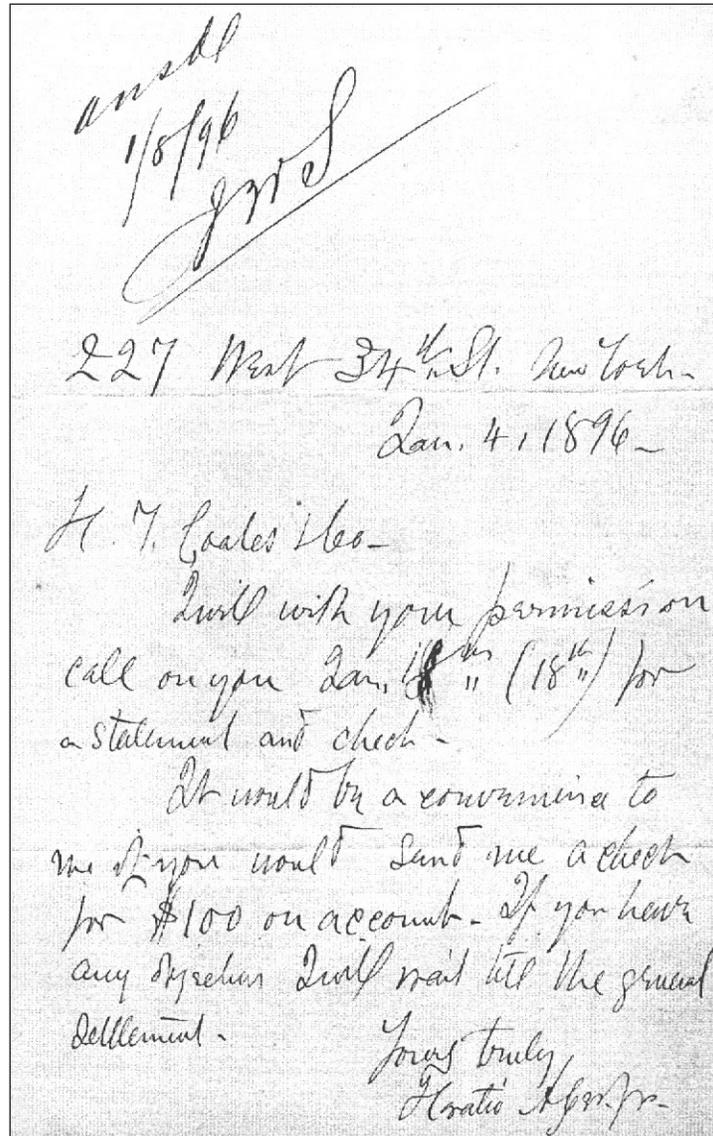
<sup>3</sup> Gruber, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Gary Scharnhorst, *Horatio Alger, Jr.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales, *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Scharnhorst, *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.*, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Scharnhorst, *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.*, p. 142.



Ex. 5: One of the many letters between Alger and his publisher, Henry T. Coates, regarding royalty payments.

## My Saturday afternoons with Albert Einstein

By Ralph D. Gardner

Being only eleven at the time, I had no idea that the year I was introduced to Albert Einstein — 1934 — was among the most crucial in his life. During his visit to the United States, the Nazi government in Germany, where he was born in 1879, confiscated his property and revoked his citizenship. To Einstein, the most prominent scientist of this century and, at the time, an outspoken critic of Adolf Hitler, the German action was no surprise and, on receiving this news, Einstein accepted an offer to join the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where he remained until his death in 1955.

During my own career in journalism here and abroad, I met heads-of-state, military leaders, literary giants and entertainers, but I do not recall a more companionable gentleman than Albert Einstein.

Perhaps I was invited to meet him because I could speak German, a result of living with my maternal grandparents. My grandmother and her family arrived from what was then Bohemia when she was an infant.

Though English was spoken to others, they conversed in German among themselves. Daily, at mid-morning, the family gathered for coffee at my grandmother's brownstone, and though little was said to me, I absorbed the language.

At the age of four I moved with my parents to an apartment building on Fifth Avenue where many interesting tenants dwelled over the years. Governor Al Smith lived there, as did the actress Ann Harding, Clare Boothe Luce, journalist A.J. Liebling, Stan Laurel, George Sanders, Peter Lorre and others.

I met Albert Einstein through one of our neighbors, the petite, red-haired wife of distinguished Federal Judge



**Ralph Gardner, age 12, relaxes in New York's Washington Square Park in 1935.**

Julian Mack. One Saturday morning, Mrs. Mack phoned my mother to say that Professor Einstein was coming to tea. Would I like to meet him? She somehow knew I spoke German, with which Einstein was most comfortable. During this period Dr. Einstein was a frequent visitor and I was present on four or five of these afternoons. Mrs. Mack and I would wait for him downstairs — never for long because the professor arrived punctually. As he was regularly pictured in newspapers and movie newsreels, I recognized him, as did passersby. He was then fifty-five years old, considerably younger than I am today, and his dark hair and bushy mustache were turning gray.

Einstein traveled from Princeton seated at the rear of a four-door luxury convertible touring car — itself, attracting considerable attention — that presumably was made available to him by Princeton friends as he, himself, was not wealthy.

He and I talked in the Mack's penthouse, and he seemed genuinely interested in what I said, usually in answer to his questions. Mrs. Mack busied herself in the preparation of tea, sandwiches and cakes, and the judge usually entered just before we were seated.

Smoking a well-worn stubby pipe, Professor Einstein asked about my family and generously complimented me on my ability to speak German.

"Do you like music?", he asked.

"Yes," I replied, not really sure that I did.

"Can you play some instrument?"

"No sir." He told me he could play a violin.

There was a chessboard set up between our chairs. "You play chess?"

"No." I fear he'd think I couldn't do anything.

"Would you like to learn?"

"Oh, yes."

"Come. I'll teach you."

Until we were called to the table, the professor demonstrated the moves of each piece. "You practice," he said. "Next time we'll play a game."

Mrs. Mack told my mother that Einstein asked that I come back, and so I joined the great man on subsequent Saturdays. We played chess, with him suggesting how to avoid my wrong moves and how to maneuver pieces to better advantage. I don't remember ever winning, though we probably never completed a game before tea was served.

Tea finished, Einstein and I shook hands as he and Judge Mack entered the judge's study for their own discussions, which doubtless were the purpose of his visits, and I departed.

I later learned that they both actively helped victims

(Continued on Page 10)

**Editor's note:** Our tribute to Ralph Gardner continues with this childhood reminiscence, written in 1991 and published in several places, including Eve's Magazine, an on-line magazine edited by Eve Berliner ([www.evesmag.com](http://www.evesmag.com)).

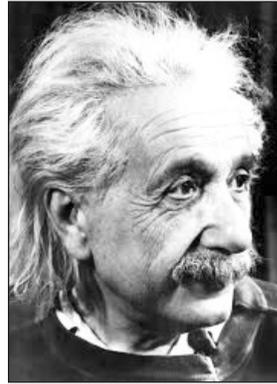
## My Saturday afternoons with Albert Einstein

(Continued from Page 9)

of Nazism — many were distinguished scientists — to escape and to find jobs in American universities, which could have been a reason for their meetings.

Albert Einstein became a United States citizen in 1940 and expressed his love for America in letters and books, which often were written in German. In *Ideas and Opinions*, a collection of his writings, he observed:

“What strikes the visitor with amazement ... is the joyous, positive attitude toward life. The smile on the faces of people in photographs is symbolical of one



Albert Einstein

recollection.

He did remember, and inscribed the photograph for me. And that portrait remains a most treasured possession to this day.

of the greatest assets of the American. He is friendly, self-confident, optimistic — and without envy.”

I had no further contact with Albert Einstein until 1951 when, given a photo portrait of him, I mailed it to him and asked that he autograph it for me. Doubting that he recalled our tea and chess at the Macks, I noted that his patience and kindness to an eleven-year-old boy remained a heartwarming

## Remembering my days as ‘Ralph the Newsboy’

By Ralph D. Gardner

Two interesting things happened at about the same time: Editor Jack Bales told me he was planning a special Salute-to-Newsboys issue. and — while searching for something else — I found the card that illustrates this article. It is a reminder of my own former days as Ralph the Newsboy. Actually, judging by the 1954 date printed on the back of the card, I must have received it 16 years after I peddled newspapers at DeWitt Clinton High School, here in New York. I had almost forgotten. It was a half-century ago!

When I received the card, back in '54, I was still on the staff of **The New York Times**, having already worked on the City Desk, and in **Times** bureaus in Paris and in Germany. In fact, it was about the time I was preparing to leave **The Times**, my happy home for 15 years, to start my own advertising agency (which still exists, although I retired several years ago).

Looking at this “Press” card, I now recall that it was presented by the circulation director of the **Minneapolis Star & Tribune** to a number of once-upon-a-time newsboys who had grown up and moved on to other — hopefully more profitable — ways of earning a living.

Slightly in error, the card indicates I once sold the

**New York World-Telegram & Sun**. That’s what it was called in '54, but during my newsboy days, 1937 and '38, the **World-Telegram** and the **Sun** — two fine afternoon newspapers — had not yet merged. Today they are both forgotten, along with other long-departed publications that once made the New York newspaper scene so exciting.

The years 1937 and 1938 were still Depression years when most kids were doing what they could to hustle a buck, no easy task at a time when the average annual family income was less than one thousand dollars!

When I was at Clinton, **The Times** and **Herald-Tribune** were sold to students at cut-rate prices. I tried to become an agent for these newspapers, but those jobs were sewed-up by boys who got there ahead of me. Clinton was, at that time, the biggest high school in the city, and I knew that many faculty members (close to 300) bought the **Sun** because it was the only New York newspaper that regularly featured education news.

After classes one day, I went down to the **Sun**, located on Lower Broadway, a block north of City Hall, and asked if they’d appoint me their exclusive agent if I could persuade the faculty people to buy their daily papers from me. I was given a tentative go-ahead, but the circulation manager doubted that I could create a market for 300 copies a day. The next morning I arrived at school early, taking up a position near the time-clock where teachers checked in. I was lucky, and signed up well over 200 of them. Many others didn’t want the **Sun**, but said if I could supply the **World-Telegram**, they’d buy it from me. That afternoon I hurried down to the

*This article first appeared as a Notes from Ralph column in the March-April 1985 issue of Newsboy. In 2004, former Newsboy editor Jack Bales received permission for us to re-run it, with Ralph noting that, “I sure enjoyed writing those columns. Now I hope a new generation of members will enjoy reading about “Ralph the Newsboy.”*

**World-Telegram** building on Barclay Street and arranged the same exclusivity. I was 14 at that time.

For almost two years, until I graduated, I sold something close to 300 papers every day. Friday mornings I left my home in Greenwich Village at 5:00 a.m., getting to school at 6:00 to collect 15 cents from each of my clients. Papers then cost only three cents, and faculty members were happy to have them delivered each afternoon, rather than having to seek copies at subway newsstands where they were often sold out.

Note that I called these customers "my clients." That's no accident. I approached the job as though I was a high-priced business executive (even though my commission was only a half cent per paper), and felt that by adding a touch of class to even the most menial job, it might be done more successfully. And more profitably. I've never had reason to doubt the value of such an approach. I've occasionally written in my books — and stated in lectures — that I discovered in every Horatio Alger story a blueprint for success. I not only tried to follow his "blueprint," but to add to it a certain flair.

I was able to test this theory when the district salesman for the World Almanac, then published by the **World-Telegram** for 50 cents a copy, visited me one afternoon while I was stuffing newspapers into teachers' mail slots.

"I'll bet," he remarked, "you can sell as many as 30 copies, and you make 10 cents on every Almanac you sell."

Without even knowing for sure what the World Almanac was, I agreed that he was probably right, but selling only 30 copies really wasn't enough to interest me. Every high school kid needs this almanac, I said, adding that I had an idea that would produce sales of more than 30,000 copies.

What was my idea? he asked.

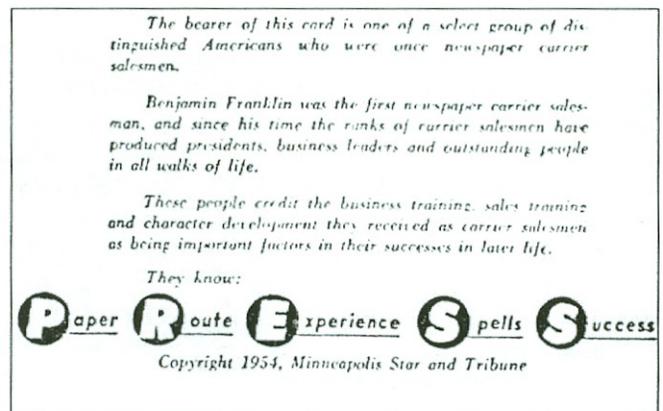
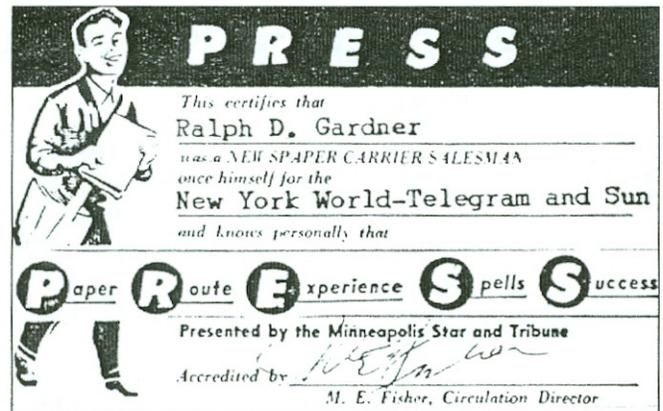
I didn't have any idea. So I told him I couldn't talk at that moment, as the teachers would soon be coming in to pick up their newspapers.

"I'll meet you at your office after school." I suggested, "and we'll work it out."

Riding the subway downtown that afternoon, I did sketch out in my mind a viable plan. Arriving, I asked that the sales manager sit in on our conversation, so I could get a prompt yes or no.

This was my plan: Every high school student takes English courses. Appoint me, I proposed, as exclusive representative for high schools to sell these — through English teachers — in the New York Metropolitan area. That is, New York City, Westchester, Long Island and nearby New Jersey and Connecticut. My method, I explained, was to have these teachers sell the almanacs, collect payment from their students and turn over the cash to my student representative (who most often was the editor of the school newspaper).

As an incentive to the teachers, those who sold 25 or



**The front (top) and back of the honorary press card received by Ralph Gardner in 1954, 16 years after his "newsboy days" as a student at New York's DeWitt Clinton High School, where he sold copies of the New York World Telegram and New York Sun (prior to their merger) to the school's 300-member faculty.**

more copies at 50 cents each, would receive — free — a deluxe copy of the book. These deluxe editions (they retailed at 75 cents) had black cardboard covers, mottled to simulate leather, with the teacher's name to be stamped in gold at the bottom of the cover. And the **World-Telegram** would, of course, cover all my expenses.

They were dubious, but went along with my plan. I proceeded to line up my young book agents in dozens of schools in the Tri-State area, sharing with them my 10 cents profit. A nickel for me; a nickel for my representative.

This January-through-April arrangement selling World Almanacs worked successfully for two years, my earnings eventually going a long way toward paying my college tuition.

After the second year I was lucky again and landed a job at **The New York Times** — as a copy boy — and started working my way up the ladder all over again.

And thus ended the adventures of "Ralph the Newsboy!"

## The big Alger question

By Ralph D. Gardner

Suppose the big question pops up every time two Alger fans get together. I know it comes up at every one of our Alger Society conventions. It came up last Spring when Bob Bennett was in New York; a little before that when Bill Chase dropped in from the West Coast. It took up a good part of the evening when I was joined at dinner by Steve Press and Max Goldberg.

On these occasions and a dozen others, we always ask each other: "Really, which Alger was the most difficult for you to find?"

After having discussed this with Partic'lar Friends I-don't-know-how-many-times, I just recently sat down to figure out which Alger WAS the most difficult for ME to add to my collection.

Now, I've been collecting Horatio's works for close to 40 years (although at the beginning I don't believe I considered myself a collector) so my searchings cover a good number of trials and triumphs.

If I had to say which there were more of, I'm afraid I'd have to say "trials," because, like every one of you, I almost always showed up at the shop just after "another fellow came in and bought about 50 of them for a nickel apiece." Or I got my check in the mail too late — some-one else got there first. Or somebody who read my ad in a publication wrote to assure me that they had seen *Timothy* or *Seeking His Fortune* at a junk shop a week ago but couldn't find it when they went back to get it for me.

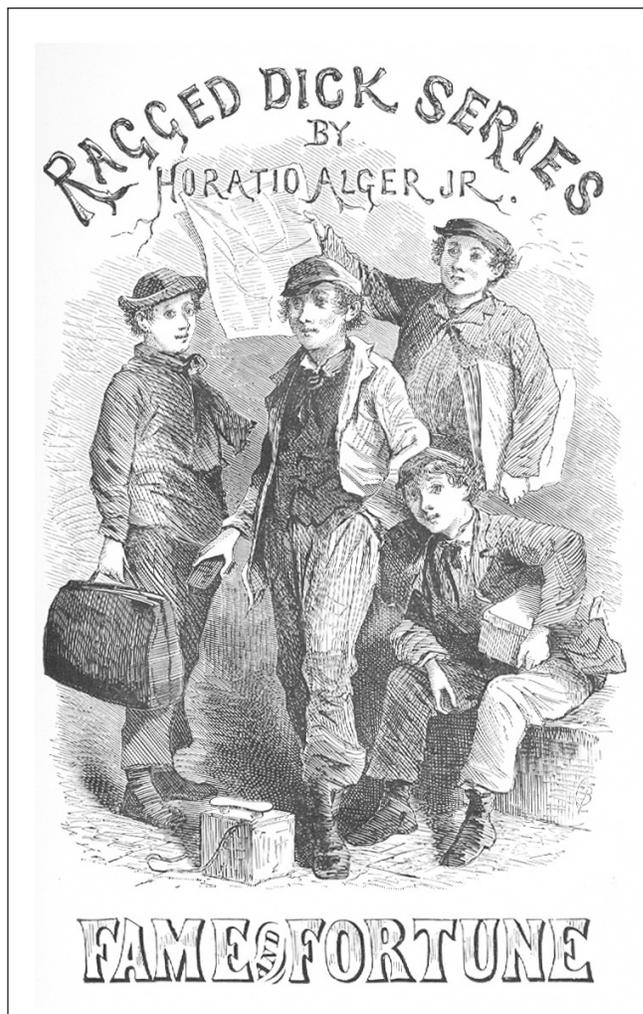
But, lest we forget about "triumphs" mentioned above, before getting bogged down in all my "trials," let me assure you that there certainly have been triumphs and although never as many as the trials — I guess that's life — there have been enough in my Alger adventures to keep me happily and optimistically collecting all these decades.

Which brings me back to the point: *Which was the most difficult Alger for me to find?*

Strangely, it wasn't *Timothy Crump's Ward*, although I'd been collecting for 25 or 30 years before I finally latched on to it. Heck, I must have been collecting Algers for more than 20 years before I even HEARD of Tim! But it wasn't the most difficult. Rather, I think, there must have been a group — four or five — real toughies that caused me quite a few sleepless nights waiting for the mail — often to wind up in disappointment. Try, try again.

I can no longer recall which was the first of these precious few to be placed upon my shelf, but I definitely recall the last. This was a real first edition of *Fame and*

*This article first appeared in the June 1971 issue of Newsboy.*



*Fortune*. I was really starting to think that I would never get it and until I made a trip to the Library of Congress to see the real thing for myself, I wondered if such a volume still existed. But there it was.

Over the years I'd say I owned at least seven or eight Loring non-first editions of *Fame and Fortune*, most of which I ordered after they'd been offered as firsts. So there alone we have seven or eight disappointments! But finally I arranged a swap and the REAL THING arrived. It was a happy day.

Other very difficult Alger first editions for me to acquire were *The Young Boatman* and *Wait and Win*. Add to this the first of *Robert Coverdale's Struggle* (for which I paid just about as much as the whole rest of my Alger collection cost — or nearly so, it seems) and the Ogilvie edition of *Tom the Bootblack* which — up to the time I found it — most collectors and knowledgeable bookmen were willing to bet never existed.

Then there's my adventure of finding a copy of *The \$500 Check* with Porter & Coates imprinted on the spine. But that's another story, and we'll leave it for another time.

# Happy 125th, Edward Stratemeyer!

By Ralph D. Gardner

On October 4th, some literary nostalgia devotees observed their idol's 125th birthday. And of all his famous creations, warmest recollections were of Tom Swift, the boy genius, whose incredible inventions opened for them a dazzling new world of boundless technological wonders.

Did you know him?

Of course you did! Almost everyone who was brought up in this country between the turn of the century and our Great Depression read his thrillers. Surprisingly, some of them are more popular today than when they first appeared generations ago.

Maybe you knew him as Victor Appleton, who wrote the Tom Swift stories; as Arthur M. Winfield, author of the Rover Boys; as Laura Lee Hope, whose name appeared on the Bobbsey Twins pictorial covers.

As Franklin W. Dixon he invented the Hardy Boys and as Carolyn Keene, the Nancy Drew mysteries.

What most readers did not suspect is that all these and many more sparkling adventures of fun-loving, often mischievous young Americans emerged from the extraordinary mind of a former New Jersey store clerk, Edward Stratemeyer.

"Our commemoration of Stratemeyer's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday," said Dr. John T. Dizer, Jr., of Utica, N.Y., recently retired professor of engineering and Dean Emeritus at Mohawk Valley Community College, "...wasn't what you'd call a wild celebration. Small groups met to toast his memory and to savor again the pleasures his tales provided. That evening I re-read two favorites, *Tom Swift and his Air Ship* and *The Rover Boys Down East*."

*This article was written in 1987 for distribution by Maturity News Service, a national syndicate, on the 125th anniversary of the birth of Edward Stratemeyer. Please note that some of the publication figures or authorship of various Stratemeyer Syndicate series reported in this article reflect what we knew in the early 1980s, and not today's latest research.*

As a youth, Stratemeyer avidly read dime novels and strive-and-succeed adventures by Horatio Alger. He harbored a keen desire to write, but early efforts were discouraged by his father, who advised him to concentrate on the family's stationery shop.

It was there that in 1889 he wrote his first novel (according to popular legend) on brown wrapping paper. Titled "Victor Horton's Idea," he sent it to a Philadelphia magazine, **Golden Days**.

When he received a check for \$75 — several times his weekly wage — his father was impressed, and the 27-year-old Stratemeyer embarked upon a writing career.

Success came quickly, and his serials with war, science, school and sports backgrounds appeared in a variety of periodicals.

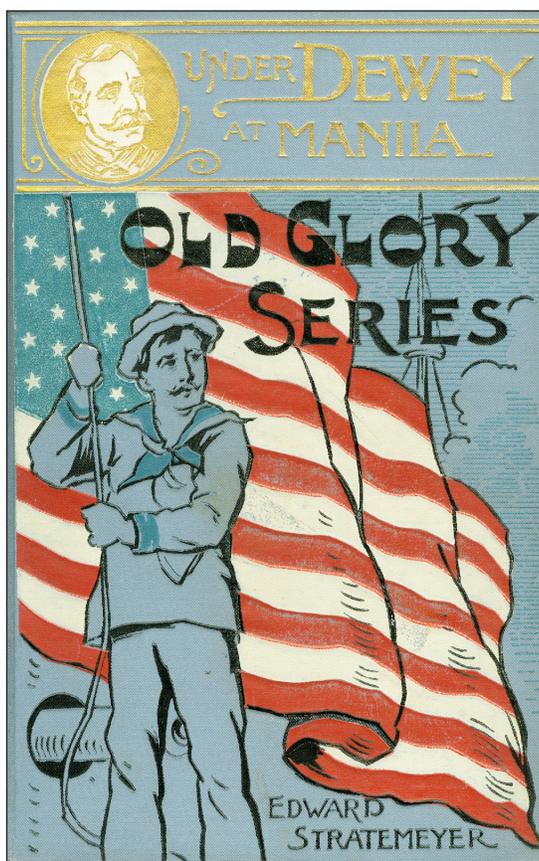
His first book, *Richard Dare's Venture*, in 1894, had been followed by another dozen when, in 1898, he revised a recently completed tale, giving it an up to the minute Spanish-American War setting. *Under Dewey at Manila* was a big seller and the first of many in which he anticipated trends and events (within weeks after Lindbergh's 1927 solo trans-Atlantic flight, Stratemeyer's syndicate produced *Over the Ocean to Paris*, under the house name "Franklin W. Dixon."

Until around 1905, the prolific Stratemeyer wrote for numerous publications, edited two of them and published one. In addition, more than 100 books had been issued under his own

name and pen names. Using his favorite pseudonym, "Arthur M. Winfield," in 1899 he had written *The Rover Boys at School*, chronicling the exploits of the Rover brothers, serious Dick, ebullient prankster Tom and the athlete Sam. Readers followed their fortunes at school, at sea, in the air, in jungles and ultimately finishing college in their 20th and last adventure.

Because youngsters wanted more, in 1917 a new series began, with a second generation of Rovers delighting 8-to-16-year-olds in 10 additional thrillers.

(Continued on Page 14)



## Happy 125th, Edward Stratemeyer!

(Continued from Page 13)

Edward Stratemeyer's daughter, the late Harriet S. Adams, who became famous as Carolyn Keene, author of the Nancy Drew Series,\* recalled the family legend that her grandmother proposed the Winfield pen name:

"Arthur sounds like author," she said. "M means millions and Winfield for winning in your field." Her description proved prophetic.

Edward T. LeBlanc, of Fall River, Mass., a retired Navy Department executive, has since 1951 edited **The Dime Novel Round-Up**, a bi-monthly journal that is the boys' books collectors' bible. According to LeBlanc — the author of several scholarly books — sometime around 1905, Stratemeyer became aware that his brain teemed with more ideas and plots than he could ever write.

He established his Stratemeyer Syndicate, the most successful fiction factory of all time. Organizing a team of writers, many of them newspapermen who could swiftly produce dramatic, colorful prose, he gave them three-page outlines, including plot, a range of heroes and villains, locales and incidents. Within weeks they returned with their manuscripts, receiving payments of \$75 to \$250. These writers, using syndicate-owned pseudonyms assigned to series created Stratemeyer (such as the Bobbsey Twins, begun in 1904), and from his synopses created many more.

Children bought, and libraries stocked, Victor Appleton's Tom Swift, Lester Chadwick's Baseball Joe, Allen Chapman's Ralph of the Railroad, Franklin W. Dixon's Hardy Boys, Clarence Young's Motor Boys and Roy Rockwood's Bomba the Jungle Boy. Most successful was Nancy Drew, started in 1930. The first three books followed outlines prepared by Stratemeyer before he died earlier that year.

Stratemeyer heroes were direct descendants of good-natured young adventurers like Huckleberry Finn. For their exploits he prescribed a formula: mystery and danger on Page 1; in the middle of each chapter a dramatic

point; at chapter's end, a cliff-hanger. Truth wins out over treachery at the happy ending.

He solicited talent with this classified ad:

*Experienced fiction writer wanted to work from publisher's outlines.*

Those he hired remained anonymous, giving up all claims to ownership, even pledging never to reveal their authorship. Further insuring secrecy, Stratemeyer scheduled meetings so that contributors were unlikely to meet each other at his Manhattan headquarters. Arriving through the front door, they entered Stratemeyer's private office, later exiting by a rear door.

As some broke their vows, identities of several who

won recognition on their own have become known. W. Bert Foster wrote many books in the Ruth Fielding series. Howard Garis, who later created his "Uncle Wiggily" fables, wrote numerous books for Stratemeyer, including many titles in the Tom Swift and Motor Boys series. Garis's wife, Lilian, did some Motor Girls and Outdoor Girls, and their son, Roger, wrote some of the X-Bar-X Boys.

Leslie McFarlane, a Canadian newspaperman who became a Hollywood film writer, created the Hardy Boys from Stratemeyer's outlines.

One who knew Stratemeyer, visiting him during the 1920s, is Wallace Palmer, of Independence, Missouri. An attorney for 45 years, Palmer remembered Stratemeyer — then in his sixties — as of slender build and medium height, with graying hair, fair complexion and

wearing silver rimmed eyeglasses.

"I've enjoyed Stratemeyers since I was three years old," Palmer said. "My school teacher dad had taught me to read, and *The Rover Boys at School* was the first book I tried to decipher." Palmer has been a Stratemeyer fan ever since. He owns more than 1,000 of his and the Syndicate's volumes.

"On one visit to his 18th floor suite — this was 1926 — I was in New York seeking literary employment. He suggested that I try writing a projected Don Sloane Prep School series," Palmer recollected. "I wrote two and got paid \$100 each. But the project never materialized. That was all I ever earned as a writer, and I was walking myself weary looking for work. So I returned to the University of Missouri.

"Thinking about it today, I doubt that he ever intended to use my stories. I truly believe he was just trying to give



Edward Stratemeyer (1962-1930)

\* Mildred Wirt Benson actually authored all but three of the first 25 books in the *Nancy Drew Mystery Stories*, with Harriet Adams editing and doing the 1960s re-writes, and writing most of the 1955-1979 titles from her own outlines.

a kid who worshipped him a start as an author."

Certain that Stratemeyer's books mightily influenced readers, Prof. Dizer "was raised on Tom Swift and always maintained that Tom is the major reason I am an engineer. I identified with him so thoroughly."

Tom Swift, like Thomas Edison — upon whom he was patterned — epitomized the American penchant for tinkering. He invented fantastic airships and vehicles, a submarine, wireless, wizard camera, photo telephone, electric locomotive, talking pictures, television and other marvels. Some later achieved reality; others are still on drawing boards.

Although Edward Stratemeyer used Tom Swift's name in an 1894 serial, "Shorthand Tom; or, The Exploits of a Young Reporter" — that earlier character being later explained as the inventor Tom's uncle, the series began in 1910 with *Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle*. Forty volumes were issued, ending in 1941, with the hero wealthy and married to his longtime sweetheart, Mary Nestor.

Then, 13 years later, Tom Swift, Jr., was launched as a space scientist. He starred in an additional 33 tales (with "Victor Appleton II" as the author) that were printed until the 1970s. An estimated 1,000,000 copies of many titles in the series were released.

A new Tom Swift collection, to be published by Pocket Books' Archway division of Simon & Schuster, is planned for next year. It will be the same paperback size as their *Hardy Boys Casefiles*, and is intended for the same readers.

Tom Junior will return with familiar characters from earlier stories, "...although Tom will be a super-special teenager," advised series editor Anne Greenberg. "It is impossible to follow previous formats because the world has changed so much. We're going to try to inject a little

more fun in these stories than in the past."

After Harriet Stratemeyer Adams' death at 89, in 1982, the Syndicate she took over following her father's death in 1930 was disbanded. Rights to issue new titles had, since 1979, been acquired by Simon & Schuster and arrangements were made with Grosset & Dunlap — a Stratemeyer Syndicate publisher since 1908 — to continue printing existing titles.

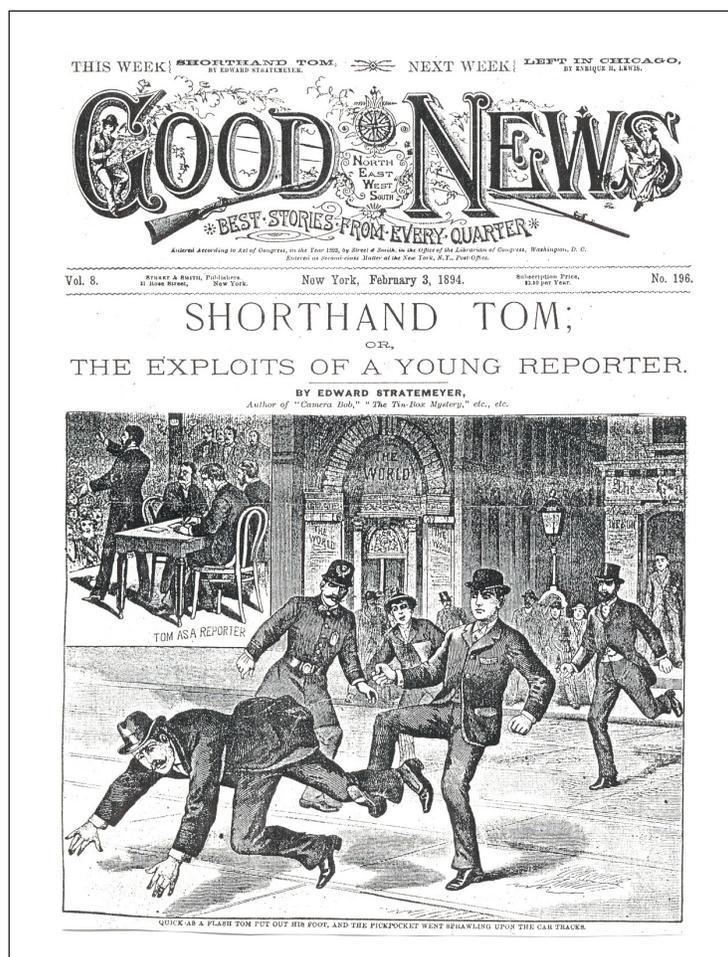
Among the last Stratemeyer ghost-writers is former Syndicate partner Nancy Axelrad, of Summit, N.J., a playwright and author of young-adult books. As Laura Lee Hope III, she wrote *Bobbsey Twins* juveniles.

"Besides developing new stories," said Ms. Axelrad, "in 1950 Mrs. Adams undertook revising most of the early series. Ethnic, racial and contemporary references were eliminated. One hundred books were altered and updated. Some even got new titles."

Edward LeBlanc remarked: "These were not great literature. They made up with action what they lacked in art. But for millions (of readers) they revealed the pleasure of reading. They were clean, without gratuitous violence and were entertaining."

A recent article in the *Dime Novel Round-Up* noted that many of the early Stratemeyer editions can still be found. More than 200,000,000

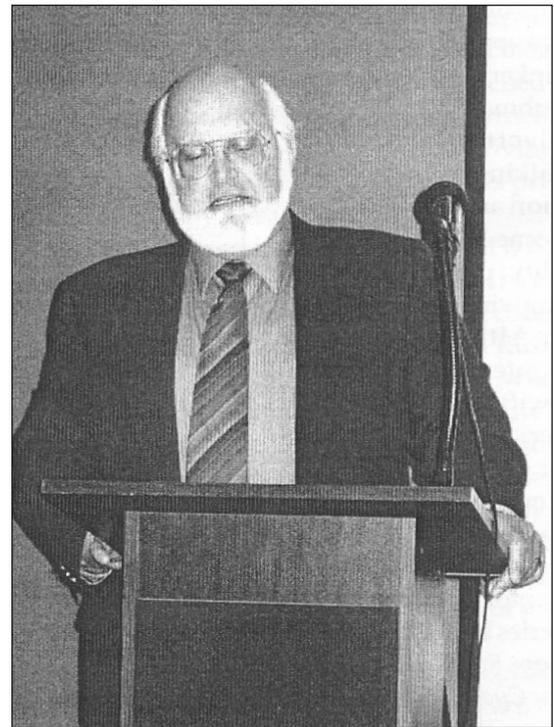
copies of some 1,300 titles were printed, so many that remain are moderately priced. Both Mr. LeBlanc and Prof. Dizer estimated that at thrift shops, rummage sales and second-hand bookstores, these sell from \$3 to \$10. Dust-jacketed and rare titles are worth \$25 to \$50. A 1904 first edition of the earliest *Bobbsey* — *The Bobbsey Twins; or, Merry Days Indoors and Out* — was sold for \$200. On the other hand, lucky pickers frequently report discovering these old treasures for a quarter or half-dollar a copy.



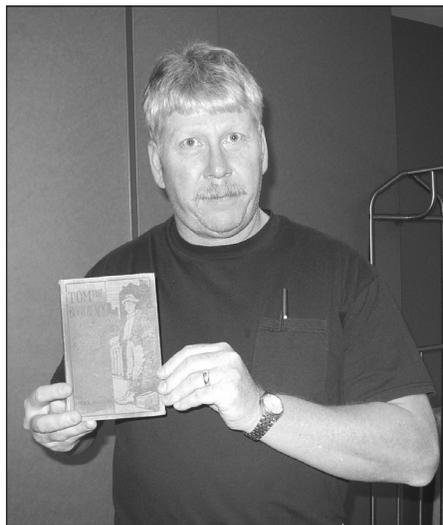
Edward Stratemeyer's "Shorthand Tom; or, the Exploits of a Young Reporter," appeared as a serial in *Street & Smith's Good News* in 1894. It was published in book form in 1897.



**Jeanette Routhier demonstrates the finer points of the dulcimer to Brad and Ann Chase.** Photo by Bernie Biberdorf



**Banquet guest speaker Prof. Donald Gallo discusses the current state of literature for young people.** Photo by Bob



**H.A.S. vice president Mike Morley shows off his scarce F.B. Walker edition of *Tom the Bootblack*, won at the annual consignment auction.** Photo by Bernie Biber-



**Chris, Doug and Mike DeHaan, who hosted the Friday evening pig roast at their dairy farm in Wayland, Mich.** Photo by Bernie Bib-

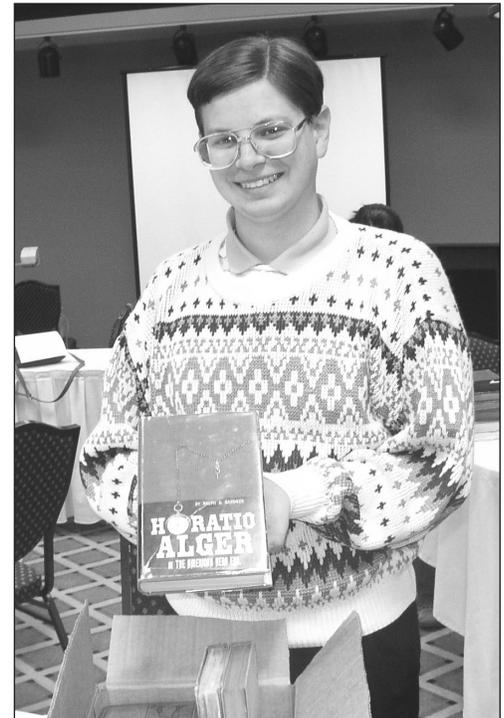
# 2005 convention flashback



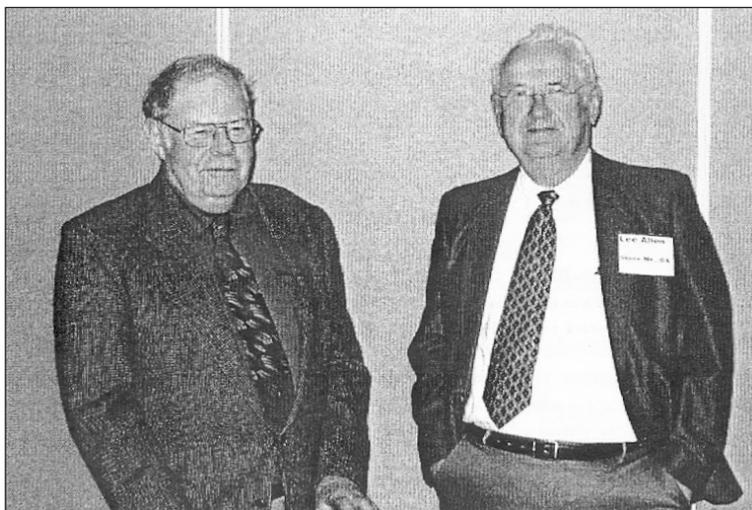
**President Bob Routhier poses with Bernie Biberdorf and Bob Sipes at the annual banquet.**  
Photo by Wendy Sipes



**Polyglot Press president Dave Scott and his stack of auction purchases.**  
Photo by Bernie



**Steven Sutton holds his newly acquired first edition of Ralph Gardner's *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*.**  
Photo by Bernie Biberdorf



**Ivan McClymont, left, and Lee Allen at the annual banquet.**  
Photo by Bob Sipes

## Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

Shepard (with side trips)." The second, "Merriam, Allison — and a little Alger," appeared in July-August 2002.

One interesting aspect of this convoluted story involving these Stratemeyer titles is how it involved the Chicago publishing firm of M.A. Donohue and its predecessor, Donohue Brothers.

In brief, struggling New York publisher William L. Allison released the **Bound to Win Series** in 1897, then attempted in February 1899 to boost sales by splitting it into four series (see advertisement at right), **Working Upward**, **Bright and Bold**, **Young Sportsman's** and **Young Hunters**. When Allison went bankrupt about a year later, the 13<sup>th</sup> title listed in this ad, *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*, had yet to be published.

The April 14, 1900 issue of **Publishers' Weekly** reported that Donohue Brothers had purchased W.L. Allison Co.'s assets (including the plates, plus printed sheets and cover stock, for these Stratemeyer books). Donohue Brothers promptly reissued them — also in 1900 copyrighting and releasing *Young Hunters in Porto Rico*, the 13<sup>th</sup> title that Allison had advertised.

M.A. Donohue & Co. soon succeeded Donohue Brothers and continued to publish the four Stratemeyer series, using up the remaining Allison cover stock before introducing its own cover designs. However, by 1902, Stratemeyer had been doing business with Boston publisher Lee & Shepard, and he wanted to buy back the plates and rights to the four **Working Upward Series** titles, those which he had written under his own name — *Shorthand Tom*, *Fighting for his Own*, *Bound to be an Electrician* and *The Young Auctioneer* — and move them over to Lee & Shepard.

Michael A. Donohue, in the letter shown at the right dated June 9, 1902, wasn't keen on the idea, and wanted Stratemeyer to either buy back all 13 titles or none, noting "... we would not care to separate them."

Stratemeyer's powers of persuasion eventually won out, and he regained the rights and printing plates for the above four books, allowing Donohue to continue reprinting the four "Winfield" and five "Bonehill" titles.

And reprint them Donohue did — over and over — into the early 1930s, in cheaper and cheaper bindings

**A letter from Michael A. Donohue declining Edward Stratemeyer's offer to buy back the printing plates for four of the 13 Stratemeyers then being published by Donohue. Stratemeyer eventually prevailed, taking *Shorthand Tom*, *Bound to be an Electrician*, *Fighting for his Own* and *The Young Auctioneer* to Lee & Shepard, with Donohue retaining reprint rights to the nine titles written under the pseudonyms Arthur M. Winfield and Capt. Ralph Bonehill.**

### Popular Books for Boys and Girls.

#### Working Upward Series,

By EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

THE YOUNG AUCTIONEERS, or The Polishing of a Rolling Stone.  
BOUND TO BE AN ELECTRICIAN, or Franklin Bell's Success.  
SHORTHAND TOM THE REPORTER, or The Exploits of a Smart Boy.  
FIGHTING FOR HIS OWN, or The Fortunes of a Young Artist.  
Price, \$1.00 per Volume, postpaid.

#### Bright and Bold Series,

By ARTHUR M. WINFIELD.

POOR BUT PLUCKY, or The Mystery of a Flood.  
SCHOOL DAYS OF FRED HARLEY, or Rivals for All Honors.  
BY PLUCK, NOT LUCK, or Dan Granbury's Struggle to Rise.  
THE MISSING TIN BOX, or Hal Carson's Remarkable City Adventures.  
Price, 75 Cents per Volume, postpaid.

#### Young Sportsman's Series,

By CAPTAIN RALPH BONEHILL.

THE RIVAL BICYCLISTS, or Fun and Adventures on the Wheel.  
YOUNG OARSMEN OF LAKEVIEW, or The Mystery of Hermit Island.  
LEO THE CIRCUS BOY, or Life Under the Great White Canvas.  
Price, 75 Cents per Volume, postpaid.

#### Young Hunters Series,

By CAPTAIN RALPH BONEHILL.

GUN AND SLED, or The Young Hunters of Snow-Top Island.  
YOUNG HUNTERS IN PORTO RICO, or The Search for a Lost Treasure.  
(Another volume in preparation.)  
Price, 75 Cents per Volume, postpaid.

**W. L. ALLISON CO.,**

105 Chambers Street, New York.

TELEPHONE DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE HARRISON 8080

**M. A. DONOHUE & CO.**

PRINTERS, BINDERS, PUBLISHERS

407 TO 429 DEARBORN STREET

CHICAGO June 9, 1902.

Edward Stratemeyer,

203 N. 6th St.,

Newark, N. J.,

Dear sir:-

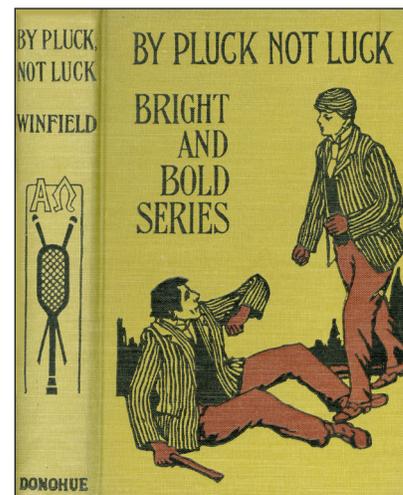
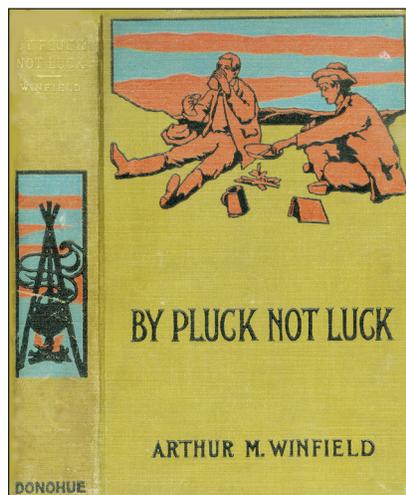
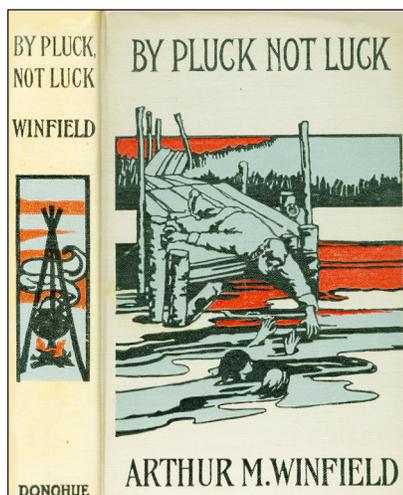
We have been endeavoring to get a statement from the various Binders in New York as to the quantity of your books they bound for us. Our records are all kept in New York and we have not got them here. The information will have to come from the binders. So far we have heard from, Thos. Russell & Son, Braumorth & Co., and the Franklin Book Binding Co. The writer thinks that H. Wolf, and the North River Bindery Co., may possibly have bound some of your books for us, but they have not responded to our inquiry.

Regarding our selling you the plates and cancelling our contract with you, we would not care to separate them. We would either rather buy you out of your interest in the copyright in the entire thirteen books or sell you the plates for the entire thirteen. We will ask you to make us an offer which we can either give or take. That is say how much you will give for the plates of the thirteen books and make this offer such an amount as you will be willing to accept for the copyrights. We will then be able to resell you the plates or buy the copyrights and end the matter.

Awaiting the pleasure of your reply, we remain

Sincerely yours,

M.A. Donohue



Three of M.A. Donohue's cover designs for reprint editions for *By Pluck, Not Luck*, one of four Stratemeyer titles written under the "Arthur M. Winfield" pseudonym which Donohue reprinted into the early 1930s. Donohue also retained reprint rights to five books written under the "Capt. Ralph Bonehill" pseudonym.

as the years went on. The best resource on Donohue's operations is Brad Chase's *Horatio Alger Books Published by M.A. Donohue & Co.* (1994, Enfield, Conn.: Sandpiper Publishing). Chase describes in detail the history of M.A. Donohue and its predecessors, then details the 35 formats of 59 known Alger titles reprinted by Donohue.

You really get an appreciation of the depth of Chase's work in tracking down those 59 Alger titles in their various Donohue formats — meanwhile, I'm just trying to make a little sense out of *nine* Winfield-Bonehill Stratemeyers! And let me tell you, it's not easy.

The M.A. Donohue covers for the five "Bonehill" titles in this group offer their own special challenges, so we'll leave them for our next **Editor's Notebook**. For now, let's take a glance at the four "Winfield" titles, reissued as the **Bright and Bold Series**.

First, you'll notice from the above illustrations the familiar "tripod and kettle" spine design used on the Donohue-Alger cover named by Chase as **Format 17: The Applique/Cooker Format**.

This was one of many stock illustrations used by M.A. Donohue & Co., and it appeared on many of its books, including the above-mentioned five "Bonehill" books, as well as at least one example in the G. Harvey Ralphson **Boy Scout Series** (1911-17).

Unlike the Donohue Alger books which, believe it or not, were produced with decent consistency of cover design within the series as described by Chase, the covers of the Donohue Stratemeyers are all over the map. It appears the bindery took whatever cover stock it had on hand and used it for these books.

For the "Winfield" and "Bonehill" Stratemeyers, a specific book did not have a specific cover, shown by these three versions of *By Pluck, Not Luck*. However, there

are still four basic front-cover designs for the "Winfield" titles, which I will name as follows:

- On the left is The Life Saver, which depicts a boy reaching out from the end of a dock in an attempt to save a drowning colleague.
- The example in the middle, Camp Fire, shows two boys enjoying a meal while sitting near an open fire. The gold lettering on the spine is not visible in this scan.
- On the right is Two Boys Fighting, in which one boy, presumably the book's hero, has knocked the school bully (carrying a stick) to the ground.
- A rarely seen fourth cover, observed only on a copy of *School Days of Fred Harley*, depicts, in blind-stamped silhouette, two boys climbing to the top of a cliff.

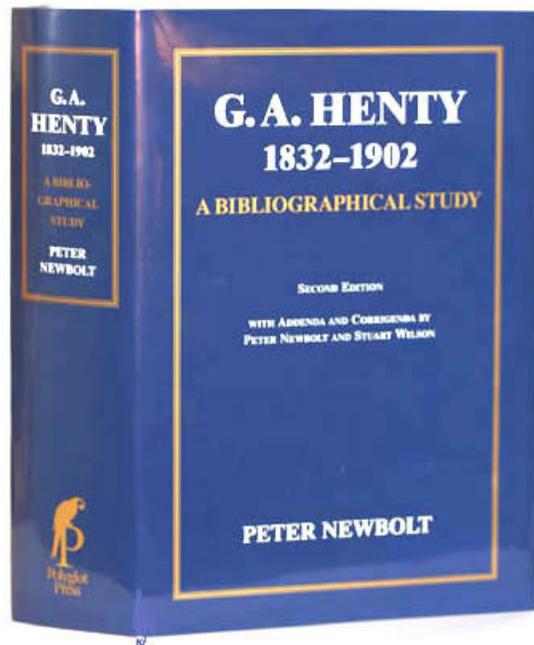
The spine illustrations are strictly mix-and-match, with the tripod-and-kettle obviously a good match for the Camp Fire scene, and a school-oriented "Alpha and Omega" design used logically for the above Two Boys Fighting cover as well as for most of the printings of *School Days of Fred Harley*. The spine for the Boys on Cliff cover depicts the silhouette of a male deer.

Just as Chase describes the various Donohue Alger formats, many of these Stratemeyer reprints are of quite high quality, in particular the earlier ones produced prior to 1910. The brightly colored covers are solidly constructed and bound, with gold lettering used in many instances on the spine. In addition, the books are often printed on higher-quality, heavy paper.

But with subsequent printings, things went downhill quickly, with the books from the early 1930s in plain, cheap cloth covers, or thin books on high-acid paper in cardboard covers using some of the above designs.

And what about those Donohue dust jackets? That's a topic for another future chapter in this discussion.

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