



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
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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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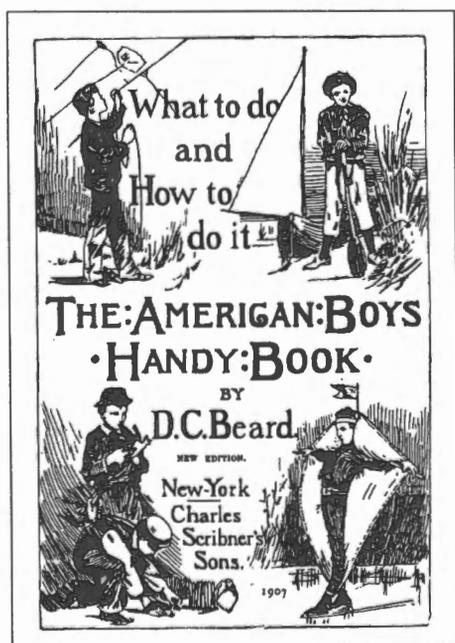
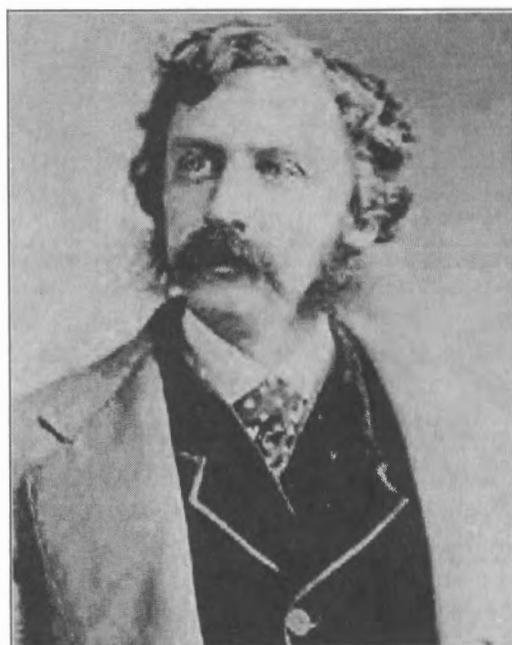
A literary double play:

Bret Harte ...

to Ned Buntline

... to Horatio Alger

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"If you build it . . ."

*Self-improvement
books for young people*

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President's column

It seems like world ago that I last wrote this column. As I crossed the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey on the night of September 8th and viewed the classic, familiar and beautiful New York skyline illuminated in the night sky for what would turn out to be the last time, I thought so much was going right with the world. I had been visiting dear friends, revisiting some of my favorite memories from Bard College days, and gathering Hudson Valley apples. I had just returned from a very pleasant convention in San Francisco and had begun teaching some of my favorite texts in my Ancient Political Theory class a week earlier. Little could I imagine what lay in store.

In the aftermath of September 11th, I began seeing Americans behave in ways Alger hoped they might in his own day. Volunteers, some from as far away as my own community, mobilized to search for survivors; others stood in line to donate blood; many more donated money to families of victims in a remarkable outpouring of caring behavior. People remembered our strengths and virtues as Americans; our differences seemed trivial by comparison to what was now pulling us together. I was not alone in sensing a marked improvement in civility — from absent road rage to phone encounters.

As I noted in *The Fictional Republic*, Alger heroes are active in helping reconstitute community among strangers, with strangers and parent-surrogates taking over the nurturance and support of those who are alone or in need. Alger arranged communities of caring in large, urban centers. Networks of people who meet in accidental encounters build communities of caring in Alger's New York. Building such networks and attending to community-sustaining activities are noble in Alger; fortunately, Americans have once again demonstrated that they know this and are ready to act upon it.

We find ourselves yearning for life as "normal," though normal will never be the same again. I see my own community decorating for Halloween with a vengeance. One of our members said to me that she sees people yearning for "comfort" foods. I myself turned last weekend to baking apple pies, with apples gathered from Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia all entwined in a cinnamon-butter crust. I have given a few newspaper interviews on the use of the flag as symbol and have participated in a few panels and talks on civil

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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 — lads whose struggles epitomized the great American dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

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The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send ads or "Letters to the Editor" to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047.

A literary double play:

Harte ... to Buntline ... to Alger

By Robert D. Pepper, Ph. D.

Imitation, as everyone knows, is the sincerest form of flattery. And Bret Harte's innovative short story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," was flattered that way more than once. It has not been known, though, that "The Luck" (as it's commonly abbreviated) inspired one imitation that *itself* spawned an imitation! This is how it happened. First, a brief plot summary of Harte's story, from the *Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature*:

Cherokee Sal is a prostitute who frequents a miners' camp. A child is born to her, but she dies in giving birth. The miners adopt the child and call him Thomas Luck, but the following year the camp is destroyed in a flood and Kentuck, one of the miners, dies holding the infant in his arms.¹

"This sentimental story," says the *Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature*, "reveals that the hard-boiled and irreverent miners of the gold-rush era are not so tough after all."

Harte wrote this tale for the second number (August, 1868) of *The Overland Monthly*, which he was editing at the time. It helped establish *The Overland* as a San Francisco institution and, almost overnight, made its editor famous.²

As it happened, an older author-editor from the East, a man who knew literary talent when he saw it, was in California when "The Luck" was first published. This was Edward Zane Carroll Judson, better known to dime novel readers as "Ned Buntline." Ned, who had arrived in San Francisco during the second week of May, was giving temperance lectures on the Pacific Slope. He must have been one of the first persons — in that area, at least — to recognize the significance of Harte's story. Like Mark Twain's "Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," also written in the West, "The Luck" was to open the eyes of literary America to the fictional possibilities of this new and glorious region.³

Ned, too, had once been a "western" editor, briefly publishing, in the mid-1840s, the *Western Literary Journal and Monthly Review*.⁴ In those days, of course, "the West" was an area somewhere between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi River. Now, reading Harte's gripping story in the summer of '68, Ned began to think that,

like Twain and Harte, he might yet write fiction set in the Mother Lode country of the Far West.

His chance came some months later. In the late winter of 1868-69, Ned had left a wife and four children back in Westchester County, New York; but he was in no hurry to return to them. He established himself on *The Golden Era*, a San Francisco literary weekly to which both Twain and Harte had contributed.⁵ And for the *Era*, over a period of some five months, he turned out a string of short stories and even a sensational novel, along with poems and much editorial comment.⁶

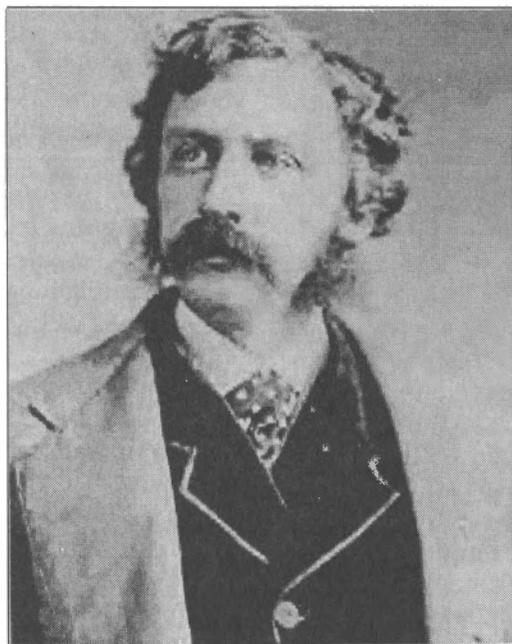
One of his earliest short stories in the *Era*, obviously derived from Bret Harte, appeared on Feb. 27, 1869 (Volume 17, Number 4). In Ned's title, "Joe Henley's Luck," as in "The Luck of Roaring

Camp," the word *Luck* refers to a person. But whereas in Harte's story, Thomas Luck is a baby boy, in Ned's story there is no person *named* Luck. There, Joe Henley, a handsome young recluse mining gold in the Sierra foothills, meets a lovely young woman, Amy Morris, and she turns out to be his lucky charm. Ned's story, unlike Harte's, has very little plot and a conventionally happy ending: Joe Henley marries his "luck."⁷

That trivial yarn, buried in *The Golden Era's* files, should, like the bulk of Ned's short fiction, have slipped into obscurity. And it would have, too, had it not been picked up, eight years later, by another visitor to California.

In the early summer of 1877, Horatio Alger, Jr., now a colleague of Ned Buntline's on the *New York Weekly*, came to San Francisco.⁸ Though Alger's biographers

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Bret Harte, who wrote the story "The Luck of Roaring Camp" in 1868.

Editor's notebook

The tragic events of Sept. 11 have affected us all, either directly or indirectly, and I believe the perspective offered by President Carol Nackenoff on Page 2 best expresses our feelings within the Horatio Alger Society. Needless to say, the way we will conduct our lives has changed forever.

On the recent book-collecting news front, the current issue of **Dime Novel Round-Up** offers the first attempt at a complete bibliography of the works of James Otis Kaler. This listing, indispensable for any collector of the works of "James Otis," includes 187 hard-cover books, several of them duplicated through the use of changed titles such as those within the **Navy Boys Series** and **Boy Spies Series**.

This exhaustive listing was compiled by John Kaler (PF-1051) of Hamilton, Ontario, grandson of James Otis Kaler, and it serves as a companion piece to the biographical sketch on James Otis Kaler (also by John Kaler) published in the December 2000 issue.

The total project was coordinated by DNRU editor J. Randolph Cox (PF-598). If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the current issue for \$3, subject to availability (Dec. 2001, Vol. 70, No. 6, Whole No. 672), or if you wish to subscribe to **Dime Novel Round-Up**, you can contact Randy Cox at P.O. Box 226, Dundas, MN 55019, or by e-mail at cox@rconnect.com. The annual subscription rate is \$15 for six issues, or \$27 for a two-year subscription.

This fall we also received the sad news of the passing of Earl Reed Silvers, Jr. (PF-1034), son of Earl Reed Silvers, author of 26 books for young people between 1920 and 1932. We were first alerted about the death of Earl Reed Silvers, Jr. this past summer by A. Lois Varney (PF-1004), of South Casco, Maine, a neighbor and friend of the Silvers at their summer home on Sebago Lake. The Silvers' fulltime retirement home was in Boca Raton, Fla.

Lois, who wrote an appreciation of Earl Reed Silvers, Sr. for the March-April 1999 issue of **Newsboy**, kindly sent us a copy of the obituary published in the **Bridgton News** of July 12, 2001, which we reprint as follows:

BOCA RATON, FLA. — Earl Reed (Sam) Silvers, 83, of Boca Raton, Fla., died June 27 after a brief illness.

He was born in Rahway, N.J., a son of Earl Reed and Edith Terrill Silvers. The Silvers family was very active in

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President's column

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rights and liberties and the antiterrorism measures (PATRIOT Act) that just passed Congress, but my heart is not in it. Even as a Political Scientist, I yearn to escape a kind of reality that I believe we will be living with the rest of my lifetime, and my son's.

On cheerier matters: Janice Morley tells me that she and Mike are in the process of upgrading the service for the HAS website, so that it will be both better and faster. They have been wanting to do this for some time. This should probably happen before the end of the year, at which point we will be able to put convention photos on line, along with an e-version of the membership application, and more. This will mean that the address for the HAS Web site will change, so we will notify you when that changeover occurs.

Also, my gossip providers tell me that there has been a wedding this fall joining Mary Ann Ditch and Bart Nyberg — we are thrilled for you both, and I extend my congratulations! You can contact them at Friendly Used Books, 12100 West Center Rd., Suite 704, Omaha, NE 68144.

I hope that your families and friends are safely accounted for after September 11th, and that you will take joy and comfort in them as the holiday season approaches.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)
302 S. Chester Road
Swarthmore, PA 19081
E-mail: cnacken1@swarthmore.edu

MEMBERSHIP

New members

Susan L. McCord (PF-1063)
93 E. Parkfield Ct.
Racine, WI 53402

Roster updates

The new phone number for Mary Ann and Bart Nyberg is (402) 551-9024.

The new e-mail address for Alice and George Owens is caddowens@aol.com

A literary double play: *Harte ... to Buntline ... to Alger*

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were unaware of it, the author of *Ragged Dick* and many other rags-to-riches tales had been alerted — no doubt by Ned himself — to the existence of a treasure-trove of Buntline fiction in the files of *The Golden Era*.⁹ Looking it over (we must assume), Alger was attracted to the title of “Joe Henley’s Luck” and to what Ned had made of the hint from Bret Harte. Scharnhorst and Bales, Alger’s most recent biographers, report that on March 3, 1877, in a San Francisco hotel room, “Alger began to write *Joe’s Luck*, the first of his western tales.”¹⁰

And in a later passage:

Despite his hectic social schedule, Alger was able to complete *Joe’s Luck* in California, though it would not be serialized in the *New York Weekly* until the following year. [The first installment appeared in March, 1878.]¹¹ A gold mine in South Africa was later named after the story, and a picture of this mine appeared in the *Illustrated London News* in 1887, only a few weeks after the story appeared in book form. Almost a half century later ... Nathaniel West copied whole pages of *Joe’s Luck* virtually word for word into his Alger parody, *A Cool Million*.¹²

Scharnhorst and Bales say nothing of either Bret Harte or Ned Buntline — the latter omission understandable, since Ned’s contributions to the *Era* have only recently been rediscovered. But the titles alone reveal what happened: “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” “Joe Henley’s Luck” and *Joe’s Luck* — all three are set in California. Moreover, the second and third narratives are by men who had been contributing for years to the same New York journal.

Clearly, what we have here is a literary case of Tinker to Evers to Chance: the ball, picked off by the shortstop, is thrown to the second baseman and then by him to the first baseman. It’s not necessary to read Alger’s novel — and I freely confess I’ve not even seen a copy — to postulate a literary debt of some sort. Perhaps it involved only the title, perhaps not.¹³ But in any case, there *was* a debt.

NOTES

1. *Reader’s Encyclopedia of American Literature*, ed. Max J. Herzberg et al. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1962), entry for “Luck of Roaring Camp, The.”

2. *Ibid.*, entries for “Harte, [Francis] Bret[t]” and “Overland Monthly.”

3. I’m preparing a book on Ned Buntline’s experi-



From *The Great Rascal* by Jay Monaghan. New York: Little, Brown, 1952, frontis.
Edward Zane Carroll Judson (“Ned Buntline”).

ences in California from the spring of 1868 to the spring of 1869. This period in Ned’s life was passed over very briefly and inaccurately by his principal biographer. See Jay Monaghan, *The Great Rascal* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952), pp. 254-6.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 85 et. seq.

5. Monaghan, who did not personally visit the West Coast when he was writing his biography, was deceived by one of his correspondents there. Someone told him — erroneously — that “as soon as [Ned] landed [in San Francisco]” he had begun a serial for *The Golden Era* (*The Great Rascal*, p. 254). That misstatement led me to search in vain for Ned’s serial in microfilm copies of *The Golden Era* for May and June 1868. Much later, and by chance, I discovered Ned’s first contributions — published on Dec. 26, 1868, and Jan. 2, 1869. He did not begin regular contributions until Feb. 20, 1869; and the serial Monaghan speaks of did not begin until May 8. that coincidence of monthly dates (May 1868 and May 1869) probably accounts for Monaghan’s error.

6. See *The Golden Era* between Feb. 20 and June 26,

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How I built my rare-book connection

By Ralph Gardner, Jr.

Lots of lurid stories have been written about how hard it is to get into college these days. Excuse me, but when I was applying to schools a generation ago, Harvard wasn't exactly giving away free cruises or tote bags to anyone who would consider spending the following four years in the frozen wastes of Cambridge, Mass.

In fact, my father — who had immense confidence in me, but not in my high school transcript's ability to articulate what was special about me — decided, astutely, that I didn't stand a rat's chance of getting into any reputable college without a gimmick, a hook, to distinguish myself from all the other parvenus with B averages and 1,200 SATs who had the balls to believe that they, too, merited admission to the Ivy league.

So he turned me into a rare-book collector. I'll admit that doesn't sound as sexy as if I'd driven a bookmobile around poor neighborhoods or gotten my *Adagio for Strings* performed by the New York Philharmonic before I reached puberty, or lettered in basketball, lacrosse or wrestling while isolating antimatter in my high school physics lab — as the average Ivy league hopeful does these days.

But at least there was some precedent and logic behind the ploy. My father didn't play ball or take me and my brothers fishing (or whatever conventional dads do), but he did collect books himself. In fact, he was the country's leading authority on Horatio Alger.

Some people may not be aware that Horatio, as he was known at our house, wasn't a character in somebody else's novel — such as Ishmael or Huck Finn — but rather the author of dozens of 19th-century novels for young people that depicted the "rags to riches" stories of newspaper boys and boot blacks who, through luck and pluck, managed to overcome adversity and marry the boss' daughter.

In fact, my dad wrote the definitive biography of Alger, *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era* (Wayside Press, 1964). So it seemed quite natural when I started accompanying him to rare-book auctions at Parke-Bernet on Madison Avenue. I must have been around 15 or 16 at the time.

Editor's note: This article originally was published in the New York Observer on April 16, 2001.

Back then, you still could get first editions by some of America's most famous authors for a few weeks' allowance. My father taught me how to bid and, on one of our first expeditions, I picked up a first edition of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* — with its original Art Deco dust jacket, no less. On another trip, I was the winning bidder on a box of Steinbeck first editions, including *The Grapes of Wrath*.

But my greatest coup came on a visit to Princeton, N.J., where I had an interview scheduled at the admissions office. I paid 10 bucks for a first edition of *The Great Gatsby* that I found gathering dust in the recesses of some antiquarian bookstore off Nassau Street.

Unfortunately, that discovery was as close as I came to becoming a member of Princeton's intellectual community. While my father proudly trotted me over to the Firestone Library, introduced me to the head librarian and hit him up for a letter of recommendation — I suspect I was the only teenager from that psychedelic era whose professed passion wasn't drugs or sex, but bibliography — it wasn't it wasn't

enough to persuade the spoilsports over at the admissions office to cut me some slack. Hell, I wasn't even a legacy.

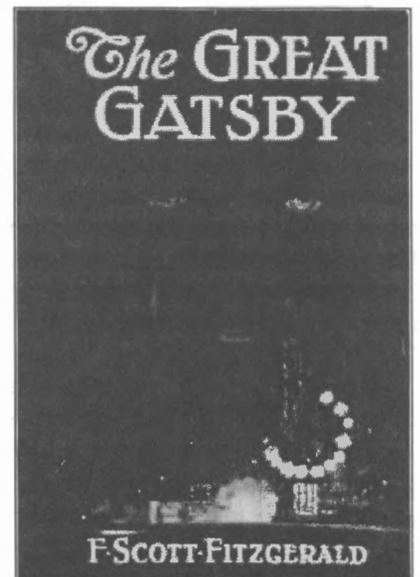
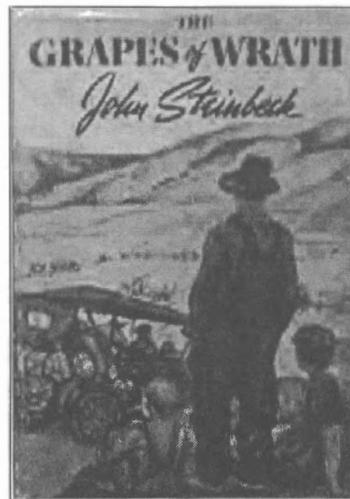
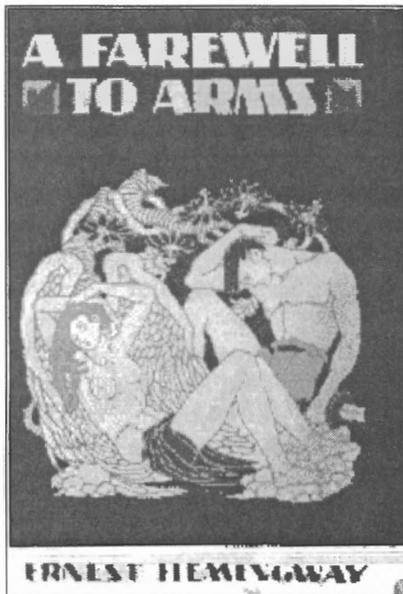
Same story at Yale. My dad and I were received with great cordiality at the Beinecke Rare Book Library — colleges have always lusted after his Horatio Alger collection and some other choice morsels, such as his salesman's edition of *Huckleberry Finn* — but once again, that enthusiasm didn't spill over into the admissions office, where they had quotas for minorities and scholar-athletes and cowpokes from Montana, but not for teenage book hobbyists.

However, my adventure in book collecting wasn't a total loss, even though I abandoned Hemingway and Steinbeck for the pornographic comic books of R. Crumb as soon as I hit college. The books I bought back then still occupy pride of place on my shelf, and they're worth a hell of a lot more than I paid for them. Also, they sparked in me something resembling a passion for books — though how much is due to a love of literature and how much to avarice I can't safely say.

Perhaps more of the latter, because lately — whenever I've passed Bauman, a rare book store on Madison Avenue and 55th Street — I've toyed with the idea of

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I was the only teenager from that psychedelic era whose professed passion wasn't drugs or sex, but bibliography.



How I built my rare-book connection

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bringing in my volumes to get a professional appraisal. Then, a few weeks ago, I actually did. It was at once a humbling and enlightening experience.

The dust jacket on my *A Farewell to Arms* was deemed "chipped" and the book itself "cocked." There was even some thought that it may have spent time near or under water. It was worth \$1,000, less than I'd have guessed.

My *Grapes of Wrath*, which I'd always thought of as in near-mint condition, was judged to be only "fine," and worth around \$2,000. However, *The Great Gatsby* — the one I paid \$10 for all those years ago — was in excellent condition and worth at least as much — \$2,000 to \$3,000 — without a dust jacket. (Finding one with a dust jacket is almost impossible these days; if I had one, I was told, it could be worth as much as \$60,000 to \$80,000).

"This is a book that has tripled in the last 10 years," Natalie Bauman, the store's owner, told me. "The book is so immensely popular."

Autographed first editions of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, the book that awakened me to serious literature in the seventh grade, and Steinbeck's *East of Eden* were both estimated in the \$1,500 to \$2,000 range.

Of course, that's small potatoes compared to some of the items Bauman had for sale. There was a leatherbound

1640 edition of Shakespeare's poems — the first time they'd ever been published in a collected edition — that had once been owned by J.P. Morgan. It was priced at \$250,000.

A first edition of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* "in parts" — meaning the serialized magazine format in which it was originally published in 1859, complete with advertisements for dish covers and cutlery and "inexpensive things required for the India voyage" — could be had for \$20,000.

When I got home, I called my father and told him what my books were worth. I'd also asked about a few of his, even though Bauman could give me only the roughest estimates since they didn't have the books to examine. My dad and I had a pleasant chat about all the stuff that excites collectors, but has little to do with literature per se — how he'd acquired his books, for how much, and the ones that got away.

He told me the story of the time he went to the farthest reaches of Queens during the 1950s to buy a box of Alger first editions from some little old lady. She'd also had a first edition of Mark Twain's *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* sitting in a box. But my father hadn't brought along enough cash, and he never was able to get in touch with her again.

When we got off the phone, I felt exhilarated from our conversation, and I could tell that he did, too. My books may not have gotten me into the Ivy League or be worth what I'd hoped, but they may have served a higher purpose — bringing a father and son slightly closer together. You can't put a value on that.

Note: The book-cover illustrations shown above are generic and are not part of the author's collection.

Editor's notebook

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the former Ilderan Outing Club.

He attended Rahway Schools, Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Mass., and Rutgers University, Class of 1939. At Rutgers he served as a university trustee and Alumni Association advocate. His father was a professor of English and served as Dean of Men throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

He served as a naval officer in the South Pacific aboard the U.S.S. Rall during World War II. He received the Bronze Star after the U.S.S. Rall was attacked by a Japanese kamikaze suicide bomber.

He married Janet Gray of Rahway, N.J., and they had recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at a party in Raymond, Maine. Janet and Earl were married on March 17, 1951.

Mr. Silvers had a long career with the Grand Union Company and served as executive administrative vice president in the Elmwood, N.J., corporate headquarters.

The family summered on Sebago Lake where Mr. Silvers' father, Earl Reed Silvers, wrote children's books for the former Highland Nature Camp of Naples. Young Earl attended the former Camp Sokokis on Long Lake for many years in his youth. The Silvers have been vacationing in Raymond ever since. Mr. and Mrs. Silvers retired to Boca Raton, Fla., in 1980.

Surviving are his wife, Janet; a sister, Evelyn Day; four children, Earl Reed Silvers, Robert, Margaret and Peter; a niece and five grandchildren.

* * *

Our two-year look at the leading publishers of juvenile books and what (if any) methods they used to identify first editions comes to an end with this installment. As a reminder, this series began way back in January-February 2000. The preceding chapter ended with Sully & Kleinteich.

Sources used in this series have included *A Pocket Guide to the Identification of First Editions*, compiled by Bill McBride (self-published, Hartford, Ct., 1995); *First Editions: A Guide to Identification*, third edition, edited by Edward N. Zempel and Linda A. Verkler (Peoria, Ill.: The Spoon River Press, 1995); and *How to Identify and Collect American First Editions*, by Jack Tannen (New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1976). Additional information came from examining the books themselves.

Whitman Publishing Co., Racine, Wis.

As most Alger collectors know, Whitman produced inexpensive reprints of well-known Alger titles during a 13-year period between 1921 and 1933. Far be it for us to delve into Whitman Alger, when Brad Chase's 151-page guide, *Horatio Alger Books published by Whitman Publishing Co.* (Enfield Conn.: Sandpiper Publishing,

1995) provides the final word on this subject, from the founding of the Whitman company by Edward H. Wadewitz to Chase's illustrated guide to the various Whitman Alger cover formats.

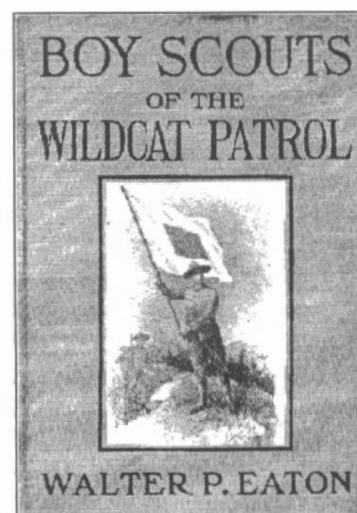
Usual identification method: Obviously, no Whitman reprint, Alger or otherwise, is a first edition. Of Whitman original series, such as the eight-volume **Fighters for Freedom Series**, no method was used to identify first editions. Knowledgeable collectors may be able to determine first printings by examining the books and dust jackets, but it may be a futile exercise. Most Whitman collectors attempt to find fine copies in fine dust jackets (or for later issues, the glossy picture-cover editions) and leave it at that.

Prominent series and authors: Whitman was well known as a publisher of inexpensive series books by many authors, as well as reprints of selected titles in several Stratemeyer Syndicate series. The vast majority of these were grouped into Whitman's **2300 Series**, a publishers' series of 180-plus titles. Within this grouping were Whitman editions (with their own unique dust jackets) of such well-known names as Tom Swift, the Rover Boys, Garry Grayson, the Bobbsey Twins, Tom Slade, Pee Wee Harris and so on, plus a large number of movie star-oriented adventure books, featuring Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Betty Grable, Dorothy Lamour, Deanna Durbin, Jane Withers, Shirley Temple and others. As noted above, the **Fighters for Freedom Series** (various authors, 1943-44) was originally published by Whitman.

W.A. Wilde Company, Boston and Chicago

As we near the end of the alphabet in our survey, we stumble upon a publisher of high-quality series books (as well as adult fiction) that in the early decades of the 20th century did not use a corporate means of identifying first editions. All early printings are identical.

Usual identification method: Later, in the 1940s, the company rectified its lack of identification by listing additional printings on the copyright page, thus leaving the collector to deduce that a copyright page with no additional printings listed was, in fact, the first printing of that title. For example, a subsequent edition might state, *Sixth Edition, Fourth*



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Editor's notebook

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Printing (which itself can be confusing).

Prominent series and authors: Some of the most highly collected (and hard-to-find) series were published by Wilde. They include the 11-volume **Boy Scout Series** (1912-34) by Walter Pritchard Eaton; the four-volume **Brain and Brawn Series** (1895-1898) by William Drysdale; the four-volume **Colonial Series** (1903-06) and five-volume **War of the Revolution Series** (1895-1902) by Everett T. Tomlinson; the four-volume **Ralph Osborn Series** (1909-12) by Edward L. Beach and several flying and radio-themed series by Lewis E. Theiss, including the 10-volume **Wireless Patrol Series** (1914-26).

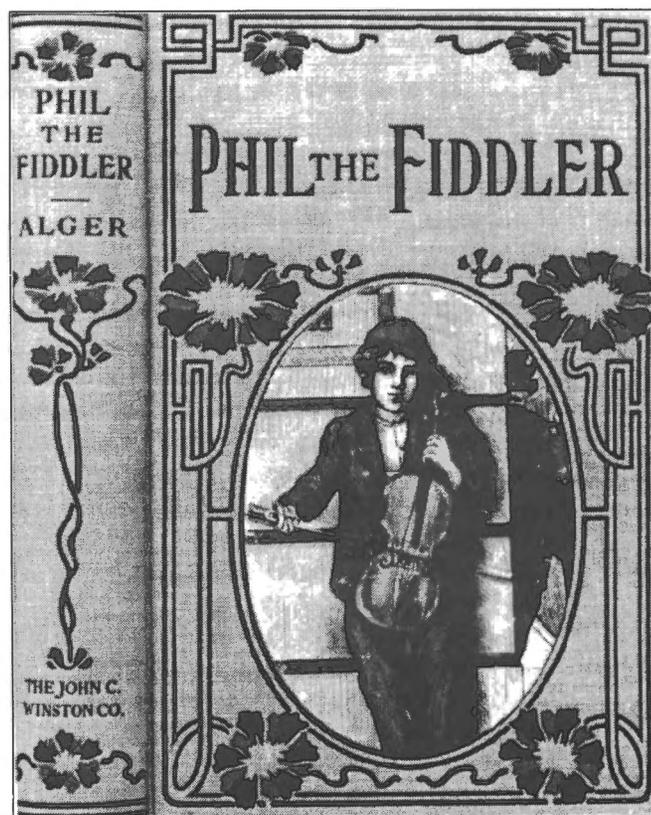
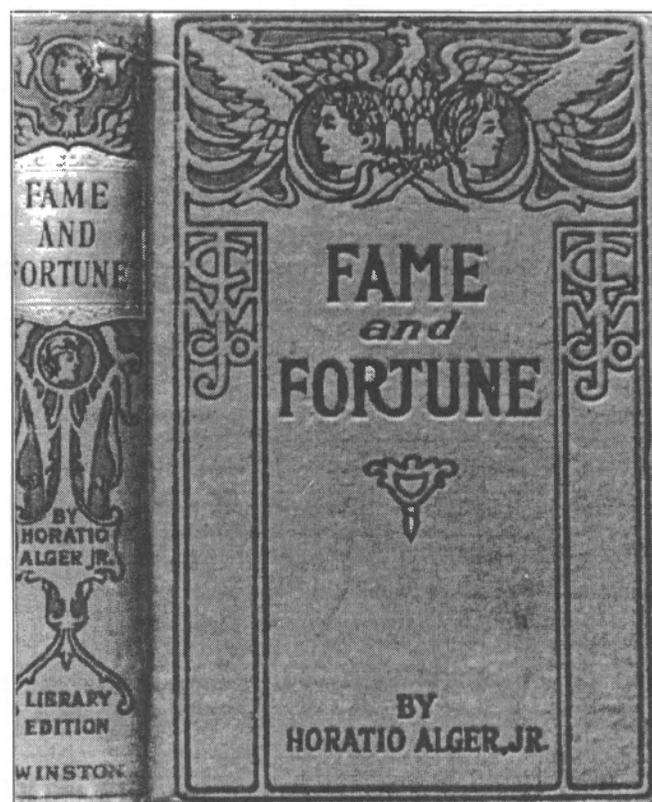
John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia

Winston is one of the most prominent Alger reprint publishers, and again I defer to original research by Jim Thorp (PF-574) and the late Bob Sawyer (PF-455) in their self-published guide, *Publication Formats of the Fifty-Nine Stories by Horatio Alger, Jr., as Reprinted by The John C. Winston Co.* However, Alger collectors know that there are many higher-quality Winston reprints available, starting with the Winston Library Edition and including the oval-applique edition (examples at right).

Usual identification method: Of course, since no Alger first editions were published by Winston, we need not discuss that here. However, Winston was the initial publisher of numerous other series — what about them? Unfortunately, other than for scholarly text books, Winston did not self-identify its first editions, the publisher's representative stating in 1928, "I must confess that this is undesirable from a book collector's standpoint but other considerations unfortunately outweigh this to such an extent that we are not as yet prepared to establish a permanent system of marking our first editions."

Prominent series and authors: The most highly collected among Winston's series include the 11-title **Brighton Boys Series** by "James R. Driscoll" (Scott Francis Aaron) between 1918-20; the four-volume **Bell Haven Series** by George Barton (1914-15); the three-volume **Jimmy Kirkland Series** by prominent sports writer Hugh S. Fullerton (1915); the six-volume **Long Trail Series** by "Dale Wilkins" (Josephine Chase) between 1923-28; and Edward S. Ellis' two-volume **Flying Boys Series** (1911) and **Launch Boys Series** (1912).

And so, this lengthy study ends. We have omitted many publishers which produced only a series or two and several which have corporate cousins (for example, World Syndicate, which is related to Goldsmith, covered in March-April, 2000). And remember, whether it's a first edition or not, the enjoyment gained from reading the book is what really matters!



"If you build it . . ."

Self-improvement books for young people

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

In the film "Field of Dreams," the God-like spoken message to Ray Kinsella, the character played by Kevin Costner, is "If you build it, he will come." Kinsella carved a baseball diamond out of his Iowa cornfield and as a result, came face-to-face with his past.

For young people in the early-to-mid 20th century, the portal to the Great American Dream was reading (that is, before television arrived in our homes shortly after World War II and changed our culture forever).

*Other authors...
...other books*

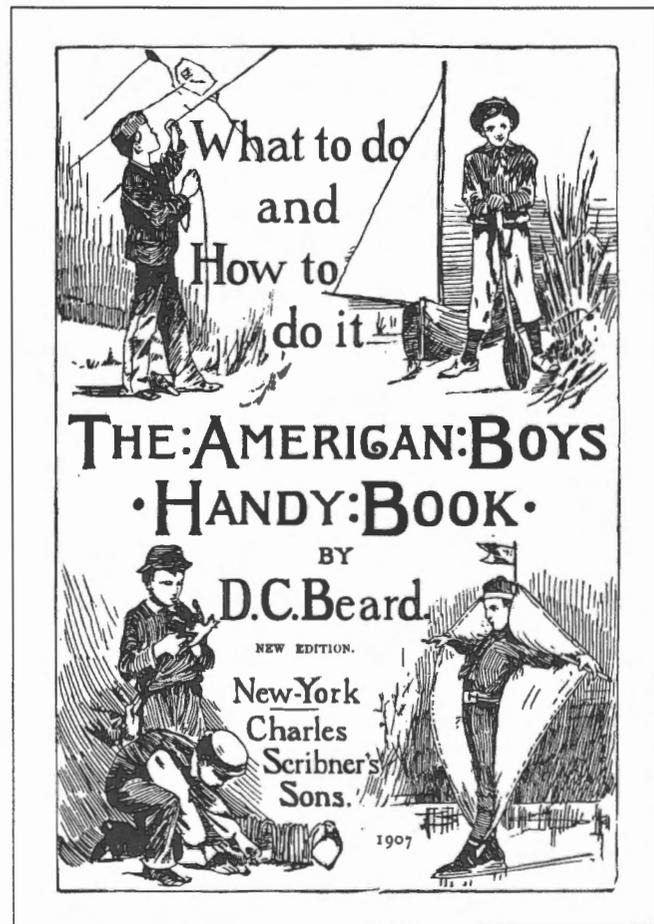
Similar to today's Harry Potter phenomenon, reading the popular literature of the early-to-mid 20th century was a crucial element of a young person's development. However, while he thrilled to the marvelous adventures of Tom Swift, or the analytical minds of the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew, the "building" of a complete human being, one hopefully on the road to becoming a difference-maker in society as well as in family and private life, was more than reading a good novel. School, church and youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America joined the home itself in providing the proper environment.

One contributing element of this educational process was self-help books, which have existed in one form or another for well over a century. What better example than *Fanny Farmer's Original Boston Cooking School Cook Book*, dating back to 1896? That book still exists today in original facsimile editions, as well as modernized versions borrowing the "Fanny Farmer" name. There's little doubt that cookbooks remain the most common self-help guides found in our homes.

But let's look specifically at books aimed at young people. What are their goals?

Self-help books can be broken down into several broad categories:

1. Books which are aimed at pointing a young person toward a career.



One of the best-known instructional books for boys, Daniel Carter Beard's *The American Boys Handy Book*, first appeared in 1882 and has been republished numerous times.

2. Books which aim at improving a person's physical fitness and mental toughness.

3. Books which are explanatory; for example, books which instruct people how to drive a car, sail a boat, or explain the rules of the popular team sports and games of the day. Cookbooks, including those for kids, fall into this category.

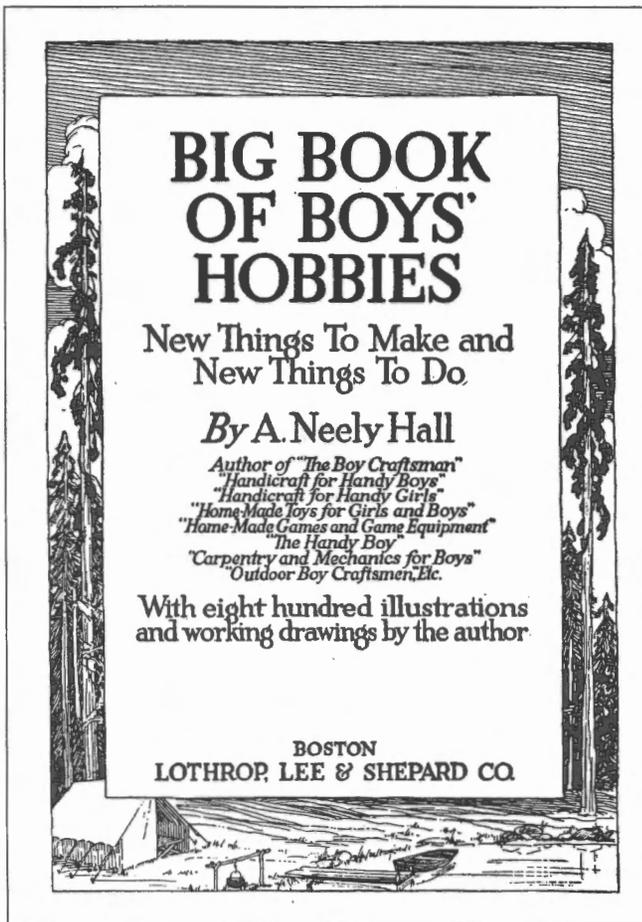
4. Books that instruct the reader how to build things — maybe not how to build a baseball diamond in a cornfield, but how to work with hand tools in building various projects around the house or in camp.

While this article will touch upon all four categories, the fourth will be emphasized, since it is the do-it-yourself, "building project" type of book that popular authors of series books tended to gravitate toward during their careers.

It is very interesting to note that several series-book authors, instead of creating separate "how-to" books, often incorporated self-improvement tips, educational

(Continued on Page 12)

Editor's note: This article was presented as a paper at the 30th annual conference of the Popular Culture Association in New Orleans, La., on April 21, 2000.



A. Neely Hall wrote more than a dozen self-help books for young people, beginning with *The Boy Craftsman* in 1905 and continuing into the 1940s. Most were published by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Self-improvement books

(Continued from Page 11)

materials and "how to build it" information within fictionalized stories themselves. We'll cite a prominent example at the conclusion of this article.

Before discussing several mainstream series-book authors, here are a few prominent examples of earlier self-help books:

- *Boys' Useful Pastimes*, by Prof. Robert A. Griffith; copyright by A.L. Burt in 1885.

Written by a high school principal from Newton, Mass., this book outlines the use and care of hand tools, and numerous projects boys can build at home, including toys, items of furniture, scientific projects (such as a home-made steam engine) and tips on gardening and general home upkeep and maintenance (including how to apply whitewash). The book is profusely illustrated with more than 300 drawings and diagrams.

- *Boys' Home Book of Science and Construction*, by Alfred P. Morgan, copyright 1921 by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

This book follows a similar pattern, with numerous projects, supported by illustrations and photographs. Again, science projects are emphasized (for example, another steam engine) along with numerous projects involving electricity, magnetism, chemistry, photography (making your own photos with a pinhole camera), along with a chapter on meteorology, including instructions how to make your own mercurial barometer.

- *Big Book of Boys' Hobbies*, by A. Neely Hall, copyright 1929 by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

This is one in more than a dozen self-help books by this author, dating back to *The Boy Craftsman* in 1905. Others include *Handicraft for Handy Boys*, *Handicraft for Handy Girls*, *Carpentry and Mechanics for Boys*, *The Handy Boy*, *Home-Made Games and Game Equipment*, *Outdoor Boy Craftsmen*, and so forth. Again, just about everything you need to know about building things.

It should be noted that a reprint edition of *Handicraft for Handy Boys* remains in print in a facsimile edition by Lindsay Publications. It can be ordered over the Internet at www.campbelltools.com/books/newbooks/html. Also, out-of-print A. Neely Hall self-help books, in particular those published by L, L&S, are available from used-book dealers, but they tend to be quite pricey.

- *The American Boys Handy Book*, by D.C. Beard, copyrighted in 1882 and 1890 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

This is one of a group of books authored by Daniel Carter Beard, one of the founders of the Boy Scout movement in the United States. Other titles include *The Jack of All Trades or New Ideas for American Boys*; *The Outdoor Handy Book*; *Boat-Building and Boating*; and, by "The Misses Beard" (Lina and Adelia Beard) *The American Girl's Handy Book*. These books are profusely illustrated, covering all aspects of the title subjects.

Again, one of the most popular titles by D.C. Beard, *Boat-Building and Boating*, remains in print and can be purchased on-line from Dixon-Price Publishing at www.dixonprice.com/

There are numerous other books of this type by such authors as Joseph H. Adams, Ellis Davidson, Milton Goldsmith, Alfred P. Morgan and James S. Zerbe, a selection of which is listed at the end of this article.

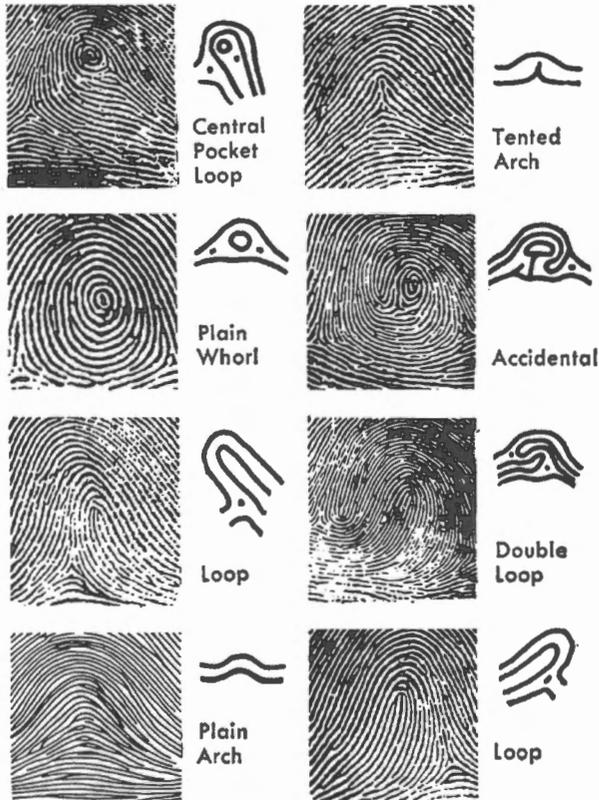
However, these are but a handful of the numerous books published in this genre.

What about self-improvement books by series-book and other authors of juvenile fiction?

Again, there are many, of which we'll discuss a few notable examples.

Two somewhat recent titles really need no explanation. They are most likely the most popular "self-help"

EIGHT BASIC FINGERPRINT PATTERNS



This fingerprint identification guide is one of several illustrations in the Stratemeyer Syndicate's *The Hardy Boys' Detective Handbook*, first published in 1959.

books among collectors today: *The Hardy Boys' Detective Handbook* and *Rick Brant's Science Projects*, copyrighted by Grosset & Dunlap in 1959 and 1960, respectively. A revised edition of *The Hardy Boys' Detective Handbook* came out in 1973.

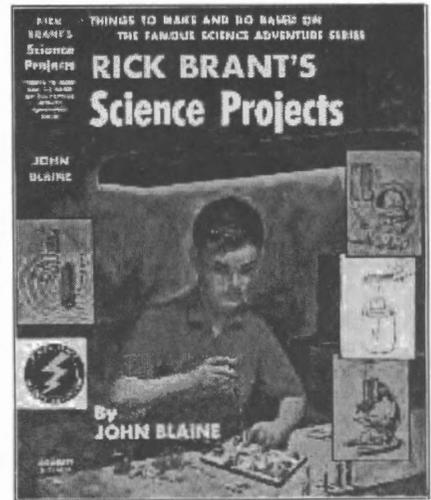
The *Detective Handbook* was an attempt by the Stratemeyer Syndicate to cash in on the popularity of the **Hardy Boys Series**. Remember, this was an era when A.C. Gilbert chemistry sets were in their heyday and television shows like "Dragnet," "Peter Gunn" and "Highway Patrol" were popular. What better way to expand your readership than by offering tips on fingerprinting, surveying a crime scene and showing how to actually make an arrest?

The early editions of *The Hardy Boys' Detective Handbook* were given a ring of authenticity by the presence of Newark (N.J.) Police Department Capt. Dominic A.

Spina's photograph on the back of the dust jacket, proclaiming that the book is "based on the true experiences of D.A. Spina."

When the book was revised and published in a picture-cover edition, Spina was no longer involved with the project, with subsequent articles in hobby publications reporting he was involved in some sort of Newark police scandal. Regardless, having a real policeman endorse the project was a big plus, a strategy similar to the forewords written by radio expert Jack Binns for the Syndicate's **Radio Boys Series** (1922-1930).

Rick Brant's Science Projects was authored by Harold L. "Hal" Goodwin under his "John Blaine" pseudonym. The book is a non-fiction companion to his popular **Rick Brant Series**. Published by Grosset & Dunlap, both the main series and *Rick Brant's Science Projects* were independent, i.e., non-Stratemeyer Syndicate.



Hal Goodwin, who in addition to his fictional **Rick Brant Series** authored numerous nonfiction books for young people on science, oceanography and space technology, in *Rick Brant's Science Projects* offers his readers numerous how-to projects involving electricity, magnetism, optics, physics, etc.

For earlier generations of readers, Ralph Henry Barbour is best-known for his more than 100 series and non-series books with school, sports and outdoors settings, starting with *The Half-Back* in 1899 and continuing into the 1940s. But Barbour also wrote several self-help books, starting with *The Book of School and College Sports* for D. Appleton & Co. in 1904. This book outlines the playing rules and strategies used in team sports of the day, including American football, baseball, basketball, ice hockey, track and field and lacrosse. It is profusely illustrated with photographs and diagrams. Examples include drawings of a football field and ice hockey rink, plus proper player positional alignment.

Barbour's later self-help books included a series of sports rules books co-authored with LaMarr Sarra, along with books on safe-driving tips, dog care and proper manners, plus as a traveler's guide: *Let's Go to Florida!*

Walter Camp, the renowned Yale football coach,

(Continued on Page 14)

Self-improvement books

(Continued from Page 13)

authored **Walter Camp's School and College Series**, a six-volume boys' fiction series published by D. Appleton and Co. between 1908-1915. *Danny the Freshman*, with illustrations by Norman Rockwell, was the final volume in this series.

But, calling upon his expertise as a coach and teacher brought Camp into the self-improvement field, too. His contribution is titled *The Book of Sports and Games*, copyrighted by Thomas Y. Crowell in 1923. Camp is listed as the editor, since he went to primary sources for the rules of the sports and games he describes in detail throughout the book.

Gilbert Patten was best-known for his creation in the mid-1890s of athletic hero Frank Merriwell for Street & Smith's *Tip Top Weekly*, with the stories eventually reprinted in numerous S&S thick paperback editions (for example, the *Medal Library*, *New Medal Library* and *Merriwell Series*) as well as a selected number of titles produced in hard cover by Street & Smith and David McKay's *Boys' Own Library*.

Frank Merriwell's Art of Physical Development, by "Burt L. Standish," copyrighted in 1901 by Street & Smith, is Patten's contribution to the self-help field. This thick paperback covers such topics as the origin of the Olympic Games in Greece, how to condition the human body, and numerous physical exercises for the gymnasium, swimming pool and athletic field.

Frank H. Cheley wrote *The Boy Scout Trail Blazers*, part of the multiple-authored *Boy Scout Life Series*. Cheley also was responsible for a prominent book the self-improvement field by writing *The Boys' Book of Camp Fires; Camp Fire Cooking — Stunts — Songs Stories*, copyrighted in 1925 by W.A. Wilde Co.

Starting with "The Story of Fire," this book covers just about everything a boy needs to know about the topics covered. The cooking section is especially helpful, containing several mouth-watering recipes, including the proper means of slow-cooking beans and sweet corn in underground "ovens" fired by hot coals.

Jack Bechdolt, a well-known author of adult books, wrote one boys' series, the five-volume **Barrow Brothers Series**, published by Cosmopolitan in 1931. But it is his self-improvement book for boys for which Bechdolt is best known. First published by Greenberg in 1933, *The*

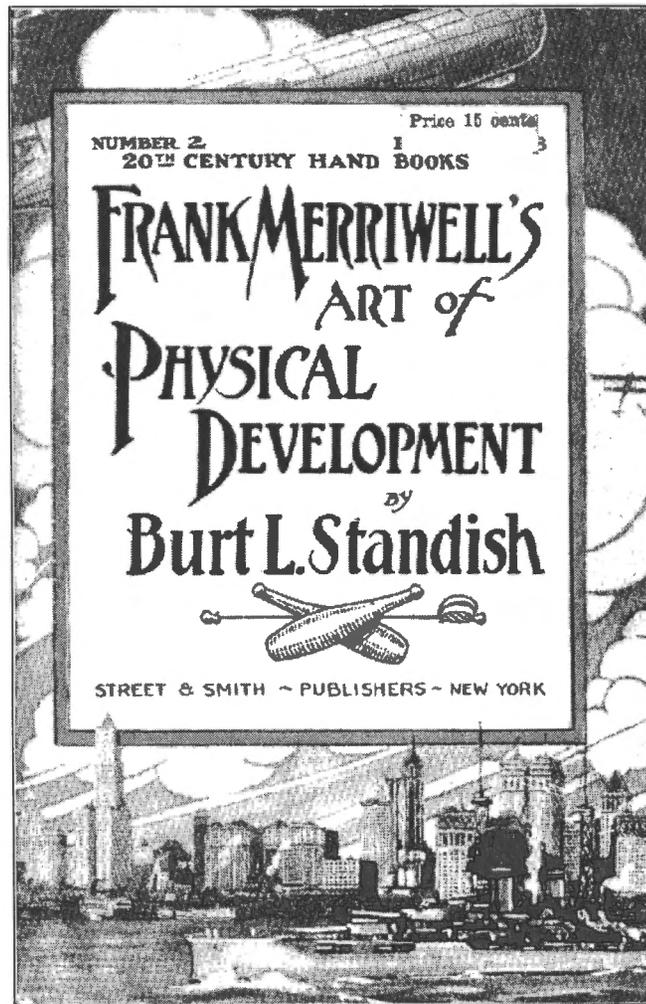
Modern Handy Book for Boys covers building projects of numerous sizes and shapes, including a Sail Wagon, an Ice Boat and one of the weirdest Rube Goldberg devices you'll ever see, a holiday Flag-Raising Machine. With this device, the rays of the sun, concentrated through a magnifying glass (properly aligned) melt a paraffin fuse, which releases a counterweight that hoists the flag up the pole. There's even a salute cannon for good measure!

Many of Bechdolt's projects are more practical. The book even includes a script for a Punch and Judy Show, and another play, "Poor Robinson Crusoe," both of them utilizing puppets, with full stage directions included.

Chelsea Curtis Fraser's major contribution to series books is the two-volume **Boy Hikers Series**, published by Thomas Y. Crowell in 1918-1919.

Fraser also was the author of *Every Boy's Book of Handicraft, Sports & Amusements*, copyrighted by Dana Estes & Co. in 1913. Once again a wide-ranging book, it covers such topics as woodworking (several chapters), hunting, fishing, pet care, outdoors sports and recreation (including water and winter sports), which include golf and its equipment, baseball, squash, tennis and croquet. There is even a section on how to properly ride a bicycle.

The extensive woodworking section includes numerous illustrations, including detailed drawings of the





Clarence B. Kelland's *The American Boys' Work Shop* was one of the more popular self-help books published in the early decades of the 20th century.

working parts of a lathe and an encyclopedia of wood-working joints (miter, dado, butt, dovetail, etc.).

Clarence Budington Kelland is certainly best-known for his *Mark Tidd Series* and *Catty Atkins Series*, but one of his most popular books was *The American Boys' Work Shop* (David McKay, 1914), which presents a comprehensive primer on building things.

A prominent example is how to build a log cabin, a book case and an ice-boat. The book is broken down into several main sections: "The Outdoor Boy in Summer," "The Aquatic Boy," "The Outdoor Boy at Home," "The Outdoor Boy in Winter," "The Indoor American Boy" and "Miscellaneous Helps," with a final section titled "Rope Work Every Boy Should Know," including illustrations of various knots.

Warren Hastings Miller, the editor of *Field and Stream* magazine, wrote one boys' series, the five-volume *Boy Explorers Series* (Harper & Bros. 1921-1926). Miller also authored a group of self-improvement books, of which *The Boys' Book of Canoeing and Sailing*, copyrighted by George H. Doran in 1917, is a prominent example. Again, profusely illustrated with diagrams and photographs, it covers building, rigging and sailing all varieties of craft, including those with internal-combustion engines.

In many instances, Miller drew his own detailed diagrams of such projects as boat construction. The book

also uses illustrations from other sources, including *Yachting* magazine.

William Drysdale is best-known among series collectors for his *Brain and Brawn Series*, published by W. A. Wilde between 1895-1898. *The Young Reporter* is the first volume of this series. But Drysdale also authored a pair of self-improvement books, *Helps for Ambitious Boys*, copyrighted in 1899 by Thomas Y. Crowell, and *Helps for Ambitious Girls*, which Crowell issued the following year. These books fall into the "career-building" category. For example, careers covered in *Helps for Ambitious Boys* include the law, the ministry, real estate, inventing, public service (political office), medicine, engineering, agriculture, and the military.

Self-help within the story

In addition to the stand-alone self-help books described above, there are several examples of boys' series books incorporating the "how to do it" technique within the text of a fictional story.

A. Russell Bond's *Scientific American Boy Series* (Munn & Co., 1905-1914) does not go the full fiction route. These books are related to "non-fiction novels," if you will, often using dialogue between characters to explain real-life civil-engineering projects (bridges, tunnels, canals, etc.) to illustrate the stories.

A good example, this one from a chapter titled "Quenching a City's Thirst" from the third volume in the series, *With the Men Who Do Things* (Munn, 1913), shows how an aqueduct tunnel from the Catskill Mountains to New York City was dug under the Hudson River in the Highlands region (near West Point).

A fully fictionalized example of self-help ideas emerging from adventure story is the eight-volume *Wonder Island Boys Series* by Roger Thompson Finlay (New York Book Co., 1914-1915). Throughout the series, the boys of the title, marooned on a remote island, survive in the wilds in large measure through a widening knowledge of natural history as well as self-improvement projects profusely illustrated by line drawings.

In conclusion, this brief overview demonstrates how many nonfiction authors as well as other authors we have gotten to know through their fictional series books, all showed kids "how to build it."

Many of these authors created these self-help projects themselves while others served as editors. In either case, by placing their names on these important publications they ensured a wider readership, and thus helped to create more well-rounded knowledge among generations of young people.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of master carpenter and book collector Neil J. Morrison of Quincy, Mass., for providing the names of many of the book titles used in this article and listed on Page 16.

Self-help books: A selected list

- Joseph H. Adams**
Harper's Indoor Book for Boys Harper & Bros. 1908
- Ralph Henry Barbour**
The Book of School and College Sports D. Appleton & Co. 1904
Let's Go to Florida! Dodd, Mead 1926
The Boys' Book of Dogs Dodd, Mead 1928
For Safety! Appleton-Century 1936
Good Manners for Boys Appleton-Century 1937
- Ralph Henry Barbour and LaMarr Sarra**
Football Plays for Boys Appleton-Century 1933
How to Play Six-Man Football Appleton-Century 1939
Football Plays for Boys (revised ed.) Appleton-Century 1940
How to Play Better Basketball Appleton-Century 1941
- D(aniel) C(arter) Beard**
The American Boys Handy Book Scribner's 1882, 1890
The Jack of All Trades Scribner's 1900
The Outdoor Handy Book Scribner's 1901
New Ideas for Out of Doors Scribner's 1906
Boat-Building and Boating Scribner's 1911
Shelters, Shacks and Shanties Scribner's 1914
- Lina Beard and Adelia B. Beard**
Things Worth Doing Scribner's 1904, 1906
Recreation for Girls Scribner's 1904
Handicraft and Recreation for Girls Scribner's 1904
- Jack Bechdolt**
The Modern Handy Book for Boys Greenberg 1933
- John Blaine (Harold L. Goodwin)**
Rick Brant's Science Projects Grosset & Dunlap 1960
- A. Russell Bond**
The American Boy's Engineering Book J.B. Lippincott 1918
- The Scientific American Boy Series:**
The Scientific American Boy Munn & Co. 1905
The Scientific American Boy at School Munn & Co. 1910
With the Men Who Do Things Munn & Co. 1913
Pick, Shovel and Pluck Munn & Co. 1914
- Walter Camp (ed.)**
The Book of Sports and Games Thomas Y. Crowell 1923
- Frank H. Cheley**
The Boys' Book of Camp Fires; Camp Fire Cooking, Stunts, Songs and Stories W.A. Wilde 1925
- Ellis A. Davidson**
The Boy Joiner and Model Maker Cassell, Petter ca.1890
- Franklin W. Dixon (Stratemeyer Syndicate)**
The Hardy Boys' Detective Handbook Grosset & Dunlap 1959
- William Drysdale**
Helps for Ambitious Boys Thomas Y. Crowell 1899
Helps for Ambitious Girls Thomas Y. Crowell 1900
- Roger Thompson Finlay**
Wonder Island Boys Series (a fiction series with self-help elements):
The Castaways N.Y. Book Co. 1914
Exploring the Island N.Y. Book Co. 1914
The Mysteries of the Caverns N.Y. Book Co. 1914
The Tribesmen N.Y. Book Co. 1914
- The Capture and Pursuit* N.Y. Book Co. 1914
The Conquest of the Savages N.Y. Book Co. 1914
Adventures on Strange Islands N.Y. Book Co. 1915
Treasures of the Islands N.Y. Book Co. 1915
- Edwin W. Foster and John F. Woodhull**
Things Boys Like to Make Uplift Pub. Co. 1917
- Elizabeth H. Gilman and Effie A. Archer**
Things Girls Like to Do Uplift Pub. Co. 1917
- Chelsea Curtis Fraser**
Every Boy's Book of Handicraft, Sports and Amusements Dana Estes & Co. 1913
- Milton Goldsmith**
Practical Things With Simple Tools George Sully & Co. 1916
- Robert A. Griffith**
Boys' Useful Pastimes A.L. Burt 1885
- A. Neely Hall**
The Boy Craftsman Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1905
Handicraft for Handy Boys Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1911
The Handy Boy Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1913
Handicraft for Handy Girls Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1916
Homemade Toys for Girls & Boys Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1915
Carpentry and Mechanics for Boys Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1918
Home Made Games and Game Equipment Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1923
Home Handicraft for Boys George H. Doran 1923
Church & Sunday School Handicraft for Boys George H. Doran 1923
The Outdoor Boy Craftsman Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1925
Making Things With Tools Rand, McNally 1928
Big Book of Boys' Hobbies Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1929
Outdoor Handicraft for Boys J.B. Lippincott 1938
- Ruth M. Hall and A. Neely Hall**
Home Handicraft for Girls J.B. Lippincott 1941
- Clarence B. Kelland**
The American Boys' Work Shop David McKay 1914
- Warren Hastings Miller**
Camp Craft: Modern Practices & Equipment Scribner's 1915
The Boys' Book of Hunting and Fishing George H. Doran 1916
The Boys' Book of Canoeing and Sailing George H. Doran 1917
Camping Out Field and Stream 1918
- Harris W. Moore**
Manual Training Toys for the Boy's Workshop Manual Arts Press 1912
- Alfred P. Morgan**
Boys' Home Book of Science and Const. Lothrop, Lee & Shep. 1921
- Anna Parmly Paret (ed.)**
Harper's Handy Book for Girls Harper & Bros. 1910
- Burt L. Standish (Gilbert Patten)**
Frank Merriwell's Art of Physical Development Street & Smith 1901
- A. Hyatt Verrill**
The Boys' Outdoor Vacation Book Dodd, Mead 1915
- James S. Zerbe**
Practical Mechanics for Boys N.Y. Book Co. 1914
Carpentry for Boys N.Y. Book Co. 1914
Electricity for Boys N.Y. Book Co. 1914