



**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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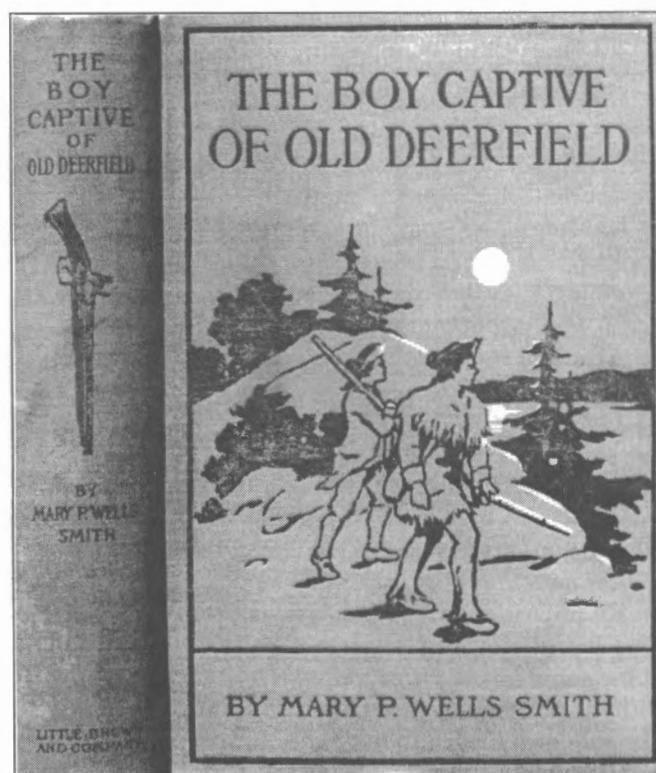
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## President's column

### A message from our Vice President

Well, winter is finally upon us here in Wisconsin (and everywhere else, I assume). Bad weather certainly does put a damper on weekend book hunting.

So instead, I suppose I will actually have to read some of the books! I wouldn't recommend most of the World War I series books, as most of them are pretty awful.

Slowly declining membership continues to be a concern. I have tried a direct mailing to about 200 series book collectors, describing the society and urging them to join. Time will tell if this approach will have any results. Our best bets are probably series book collectors (especially pre-Depression) and 19th century American literature academic people. If any of you have any ideas, please let me know.

I recently switched to a cable Internet service, which promptly filed for bankruptcy the next month. My current e-mail address is rhuber35@charter.net. Hopefully, they will still be in business when you get this issue of *Newsboy*.

As mentioned in my last column, I had built a set of bookshelves that fit into a large closet without nails or fasteners. They just use the weight of the books and the sides of the closet to stay up. Well, now I am remodeling the inside of my house, and doing almost all the work myself. Some of this involves new carpet, so I had to take all the books down into the basement and disassemble the shelves! The timing of my projects is somewhat suboptimal. Of course, the Alger collection had to be stored where it is least likely that the roof will leak, which would be a fate too terrible to contemplate.

It is amazing how small one's book collection looks until it has to be moved, and then moved back, of course. This is probably why my father and mother have lived in the same house for 49 years.

My only visit to Salt Lake City, the site of the next Horatio Alger Society convention, was over 25 years ago. However, there are fond memories of very good book hunting there; a copy of *Trigger Berg and the Cock-eyed Ghost* in a jacket was my best find. Of course, that was a long time ago, but with expanded book interests, something will certainly turn up. The non-book related sightseeing was also wonderful.

The first weekend of May 2002 feels like a long time from now, but it will be upon us quicker than we

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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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You can visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at [www.ihot.com/~has/](http://www.ihot.com/~has/)

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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 2002 welcome from Salt Lake City!

By Ralph J. Carlson (PF-955)

**W**elcome to Salt Lake City — “Crossroads of the West!” By convention time, you will have seen all the 2002 Winter Olympic Games venues on television ... now, it is your opportunity to see for yourself Salt Lake City and the surrounding areas during the 2002 Horatio Alger Society convention May 2-5.

There are lots of things to do, so you may want to extend your stay by a few days to take in the many sites. From Salt Lake's earliest days, a high priority has been placed on the arts. The nation's first State Arts Council was organized in 1899. Once established, theatres were built as quickly as churches. Today, Salt Lake City is home to the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and boasts its own symphony, ballet, theatre, opera and modern dance companies. Art galleries abound. You may want to spend some time tracing your roots at the Family History Library, which has the largest collection of surnames in the world.

Things to do include a visit to the world's largest open-pit copper mine, a tour of Temple Square, and performances by our various musical groups. There is also the Utah Olympic Park in nearby Park City and with record snow expected, Snowbird Ski Resort will still probably have a lift open on the upper side of the mountain.

You can also visit the Utah Museum of Natural History, which has the world's largest collection of Jurassic-period dinosaurs. Also not to be missed is the historic Heber Valley Railroad, where you can take a ride on a train powered by a 100-year-old steam engine.

Utah is the “Center of Scenic America,” and many

national parks and monuments are within driving distance. These attractions include Zion, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Arches and Dead Horse Point, and are within 4-5 hours' drive of Salt Lake City for H.A.S. members who want to extend their visit. River trips in the spring are also popular, on the Colorado and Green Rivers.

Travel to Salt Lake City is convenient by air, as a wide variety of airlines offer service, including Delta, United, Continental, American, Southwest, Northwest, Frontier, Skywest and Jetblue. You can take advantage of low fares being offered by making your convention travel reservations early.

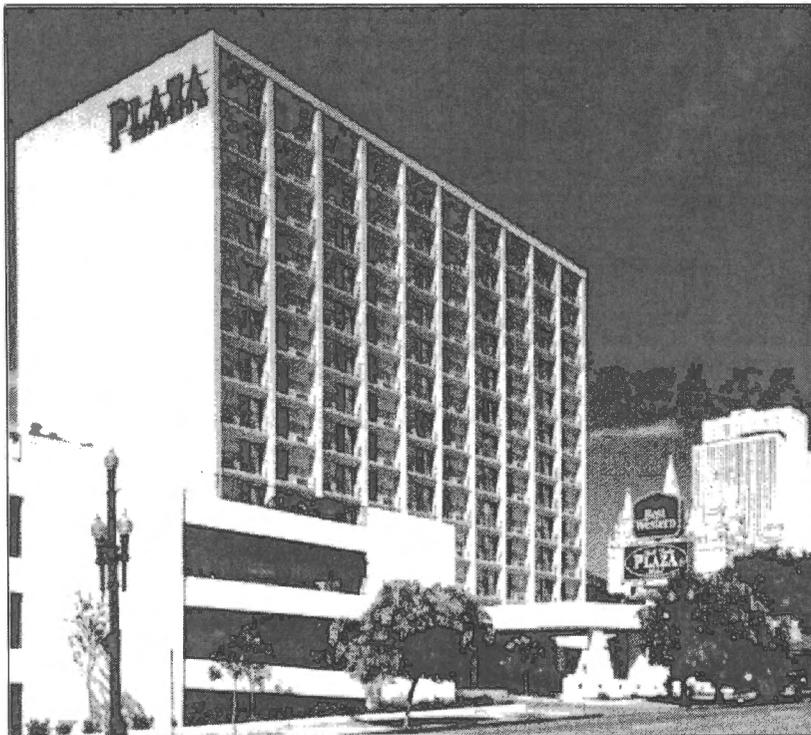
For those visitors who want to shop, there are three large shopping malls within walking distance of our convention hotel, the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel, which is conveniently located on historic Temple Square. Recommended for your shopping pleasure

are ZCMI Mall, Fashion Place and the Gateway Mall. Numerous restaurants offering a wide variety of cuisine are also within easy walking distance and are just waiting to serve your tastes.

In the January-February 2002 issue of *Newsboy*, we will include the registration form for the convention and complete hotel reservation information, along with a schedule of events and additional information on the many things to see and do in the Salt Lake City area.

Plan now on attending the 2002 Horatio Alger Society convention, and don't miss out on this opportunity to have a wonderful time and renew acquaintances with all your Partic'lar Friends.

We're looking forward to your attendance!



**The Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel, located on historic Temple Square, will welcome Horatio Alger Society members and their guests for the annual H.A.S. convention May 2-5, 2002.**

## Editor's notebook

Another year has passed, and it was a year most of us would like to forget, except for the fact that Americans have responded admirably to the horror of Sept. 11.

In the days that followed the terrorist attacks, assistance for devastated lower Manhattan came in all forms, and although the sad truth remains that few, if any, survivors were discovered in the wreckage of the World Trade Center after the initial 24-hour period, that didn't prevent cities and towns throughout the United States from sending volunteers to New York. This involved search-and-rescue teams as well as volunteers providing administrative and moral assistance to the New York Fire Department and New York Police Department, whose members had been working at ground zero well past total exhaustion.

My "home town" of Chicago, for example, sent hundreds of volunteers, as did many of our fire and police departments in the suburbs.

This assistance came from as far away as California, and Horatio Alger Society members Janice (PF-957) and Mike Morley (PF-934) experienced this close up when they visited a local pet supply store in their hometown of Fremont, Calif., that was hosting a special fund-raising event for the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that trains search dogs for fire departments.

On Nov. 11, members of the Fremont Fire Department made an appearance at Bogie's Pet Supply to discuss their experiences in the New York search-and-rescue effort with two of their specially trained Labrador retrievers, Zack and Tammy. The dogs were accompanied by their handlers, firefighter-paramedic Jeffrey Place and firefighter Sergio Morariu.

Zack, age 5, and Tammy, age 3, have been trained to sniff out survivors trapped in collapsed buildings. Zack and Place traveled to New York on Sept. 19, and went to work immediately in the maze of voids amid the rubble in the subterranean levels of the World Trade Center site.

Tammy and her handler, Morariu, arrived at ground zero a week later. This was the first time Zack and Tammy had actually been sent to a disaster site since finishing their training.

"It was a tough time finding anyone alive," Morariu told a reporter from the Fremont Argus. "There was all this office equipment, but you couldn't find a key on a

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**H.A.S. director Janice Morley (PF-957) receives a kiss from Zack, a 5-year-old Labrador retriever who assisted in search operations in September at the World Trade Center in New York. Zack, assigned to the Fremont, Calif., Fire Department, took part in a mid-November fund-raising event for the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation.** Fremont Argus Photo

## President's column

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think. Ralph Carlson (PF-955), our 2002 convention host, gives us a sneak preview of the Salt Lake City area on Page 3.

With work, winter weather, and remodeling, I anticipate that the next few months will be pretty dull and quiet. Let me know if you have any news or find any great books. At least I can have vicarious thrills!

Your Partic'lar Friend,  
Bob Huber (PF-841)  
205 Ozark Trail  
Madison, WI 53705  
(608) 238-1298  
E-mail: rhuber35@charter.net

# Two Alger stories for the holidays

*Editor's note: Horatio Alger, Jr., was a prolific author of short stories, in particular during the early decades of his career. Many of these stories are well known, others not so familiar; in addition, new discoveries continue to turn up from time to time.*

*The following two stories fall into the "well-known" category. "John Stevenson's Good Fortune. A New Year's Story," was published Jan. 5, 1867 in Gleason's Literary Companion and reappeared in the Nov. 1876 issue of Gleason's Monthly Companion. "John Rawson's Christman Gift" was published in the Dec. 28, 1867, Gleason's Literary Companion. Both stories, written under the "Rev. Horatio Alger, Jr." byline, are appearing in Newsboy for the first time.*

*A listing of these and other Alger short stories and their original published sources, compiled by Gilbert K. Westgard II and Bob Bennett, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Alger's Shorts," appeared in the Dec. 1974 Newsboy (Vol. 13, No. 5). Bennett published the list of short stories and their sources in his Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Comprehensive Bibliography, in 1980. The most recent resource is Victor Berch and Eddie LeBlanc's The Alger Short Stories. (Fall River, Mass., 1990: Edward T. LeBlanc, publisher).*

*The source of the following two stories is from original issues of Gleason's Literary Companion in the holdings of the Horatio Alger Society repository at Northern Illinois University Libraries, DeKalb, Ill. A few minor publisher's typographical errors from the originals were corrected.*

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## John Rawson's CHRISTMAS GIFT

By Rev. Horatio Alger, Jr.

It was a cold, forbidding day, as it well might be, for it was the day before Christmas, when a young man of twenty-seven, his face well bronzed by exposure, stood on the hill that overlooked the village of Wellburn, and with thoughtful gaze let his eyes rest upon the peaceful little village that had once been his home.

"It is ten years," he thought, "since I saw Wellburn and it looks still the same — not a day older than when I left it. How full of changes and vicissitudes it has been to me. But all has turned out happily, thank God! I come home with money enough to make me rich in the eyes of my old neighbors. If only they are living to share it with me I shall be happy."

And who were they?

Ten years ago John Rawson had left home without his father's permission. He had always been a headstrong boy, full of wild animal spirits, and impatient of control. Perhaps his father had not been forbearing enough with him. At all events their wills clashed, there was a bitter scene and mutual recrimination, and one morning John made up a little bundle of clothes and left home before sunrise. His father had never heard from him since.

He had led a life of vicissitudes. Shipping on board a vessel bound for the East Indies, he had gone thither and returned, and then made other voyages, spending as he went till five years previous he reached Australia and there turned over a new leaf. He became steady, for time favored him and he rapidly accumulated money. But why during all this time did he not write home? Did not the image of his grandmother and her sorrowful face ever come before him and lead him to yearn for tidings from home?

Yes, often, but he was proud. His father had predicted that he would never do well, and he wished to come home prosperous. For his father he did not fear. He was comfortably off, and poverty was the last thing he anticipated for him.

But nothing is more uncertain than money. Mr. Rawson rashly invested his money in some promising Western speculation, and lost it all. The money had been raised by a mortgage on his farm, and that had been foreclosed only three months before. Bodily infirmity came upon the farmer with his pecuniary troubles, and too ill to work he and his wife were glad to find a temporary shelter in a miserable little cabin which in his days of prosperity he would have deemed uninhabitable.

"What day is it, wife?" he asked in a dispirited voice, looking up from the arm-chair in which he sat.

"Thursday."

"And tomorrow will be Christmas day?"

"Yes."

He sighed.

"Merry Christmas, I used to call it, but I shall never have another merry Christmas."

"You must try to be resigned, dear husband. Doubtless our little calamities have come upon us for some good purpose. Otherwise God would not have sent them."

"Perhaps so, Sarah. That is the right way to look

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## John Rawson's CHRISTMAS GIFT

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at it, if one can, no doubt, but I can't help regretting the past."

"We did not know our own happiness then, husband. But after all, poverty is not the worst thing we can suffer."

"What is there worse?"

"The loss of those we love," said his wife in a low voice.

"I know what you are thinking of," he said, sadly.

"Of our son."

"Yes. He might have been the staff and stay of our old age, but he was impetuous and unmanageable, and in our old age we are forsaken."

"But not forsaken of God."

"I hope not."

"I am sure not. He may yet turn our sorrow into gladness."

"It is too late for that, Sarah."

"It is never too late for Him."

It was easy to see that the wife's faith was deeper and more earnest than that of the husband, as is generally the case.

She still believed in and trusted God, he only partially.

The night passed away, and the morrow dawned — Christmas Day. It was bright and beautiful. The sunshine lay like a glory upon the broad fields, and everything looked bright and cheerful.

"Raise the curtain, Sarah," said Mr. Rawson. "No, not that one, the one that looks towards our old house."

She did as requested.

"How many Christmas Days I have spent there. I little thought I should ever have come to this."

"Let us be thankful for even this shelter, husband. It might have been worse."

"I don't well see how."

She did not answer him immediately, for he was not in a cheerful mood.

"What are we going to have for dinner?" he asked soon after.

"I thought we would warm up the meat we had yesterday," his wife said hesitatingly.

"A rare Christmas dinner," he said bitterly.

"I am afraid there are some who would feel themselves fortunate even with that."

"What a provoking woman you are!" said he peevishly.

"Because I won't look on the dark side," she returned with a faint smile. "I would, if it would make me feel any happier."

"Don't talk to me of happiness. That will never come again for us."

"I don't know how it is, husband, but I never felt more cheerful or light-hearted in my life. I can't help feeling that some great happiness is in store for us."

"If you mean that we are ever likely to get our money back, you need have no hopes of that. It is utterly and irrevocably gone."

He might have added that it was his own indiscreet act by which it had been lost, but we are apt to be indulgent in our own follies.

"No, it isn't that," said Mrs. Rawson. "I don't know indeed what it is, but as we sometimes have presentments of evil, I think we may sometimes have a feeling of the approach of joy."

There was a silence unbroken, till a vigorous knock was heard at the door.

Mrs. Rawson answered the summons herself. She saw herself the young man introduced at the commencement of the story, but either her eyes were dim or her maternal instinct failed her for she did not recognize in the well-knit and vigorous frame of the young man, the boy of seventeen, who ten years before had left her roof, and had never been seen or heard of since.

It was not without a quicker motion of the heart, that the young man looked upon the worn but well-remembered face of the gentle mother whom he had known so well.

"Is Mr. Rawson at home?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. Would you like to see him?"

"If you please."

"Please come in. My husband is a little infirm, at present, but I hope he will soon be able to be about as usual."

The young man entered, and tears rose in his eyes when he saw the mean habitation with which his parents had to be contented. "Thank God," he thought, "I shall be able to change all that."

"Excuse the liberty I have taken in calling upon you, Mr. Rawson," he said, "but I have some thoughts of purchasing the farm which you formerly owned, and have been referred to you for your information concerning it. It is really a valuable farm, is it not?"

"An excellent one — none better — and would have been mine today if I had not been drawn on to speculate in property which I had never seen. The

result is, poverty in my old age."

"You have been indeed unfortunate, sir, but the tide may turn."

Mr. Rawson shook his head impatiently.

"That is what my wife tells me," he said, "but there is little hope of that."

"Should you regard five thousand dollars as too high a price for the farm, Mr. Rawson?"

"No, it is well worth that."

"I am glad of it, for to tell the truth, I have already bought it."

"Will you settle on it yourself? In that case we shall be neighbors."

"Yes, I hope we may be very near neighbors, but I did not buy the farm for myself, but as a Christmas present for some dear friends of mine."

"A Christmas present. It is a valuable one indeed."

"Yes, but since it is intended for my father it cannot be considered too valuable."

"Your father is fortunate in having so devoted a son."

"I am not sure that he thinks so. I am afraid that I have been lacking in duty."

"I beg pardon, sir, but you have not yet mentioned your name."

"My name," said the young man, deliberately, "is John Rawson."

"John!" exclaimed the mother, rising and looking eagerly in his face.

"Yes, mother," said the young man, embracing her, "the truant has returned. Is he welcome?"

"Oh, John, this is a happy day. I was sure something was going to happen to make it a merry Christmas."

An hour was passed in relating his varied experience, and then John Rawson said,

"Father, I have bought the old farm back again, not for myself but for you. Here is the deed. It is yours wholly and without incumbrance."

"But can you afford such a gift, my son?" asked his father, doubtfully.

"I could buy it thrice over, Father, if I pleased. I have been prospered in Australia, and am independent."

"Then I shall accept it, John, thankfully. You can't tell how I have mourned its loss, and how much joy I shall feel in going back. Just before you came my heart was full of repining. God has shown me my error by loading me with benefits. Blessed be His name!"

So the day which open inauspiciously, closed happily, and John Rawson felt that he had never passed a merrier Christmas.

## JOHN STEVENSON'S GOOD FORTUNE A NEW YEAR'S STORY

By Rev. Horatio Alger, Jr.

On the last night of the year John Stevenson plodded thoughtfully home in the rain, under cover of a faded umbrella. He was a book-keeper in the large establishment of Green & Sons, No. \_\_\_ Washington Street. His thoughts were on the whole of a desponding nature. He was blest with a good wife and four promising children, but during the last year such had been the advance in the cost of food and all articles of clothing that he had found it almost impossible suitably to feed and clothe his family and yet keep from falling into debt.

Three months before, perceiving how inadequate his salary was to his needs, he ventured to request a small increase, only a hundred dollars, but Mr. Green chanced to be in a bad humor, and answered him so abruptly and coldly that he had never ventured to repeat the petition. His own overcoat was very shabby, so much so that he had once or twice absented himself from church from shame at its appearance. Johnny, his oldest boy, was in immediate want of one also but how he could manage to get either was a problem which the poor book-keeper found it hard to solve.

Arrived at home he was met by his wife, who received him with a cheerful smile and helped him off with his coat.

"John," she said, don't you think you can manage to get a new coat? You really need one."

John Stevenson shook his head.

"I know that, Martha, but a new coat would cost me at the very least, thirty dollars, and even then I could not get such a one as I wished. I must give it up."

"If Mr. Green would only increase your salary."

"There is no chance of it."

"Have you asked him?"

"Yes, three months since."

"And what did he say?"

"That if I considered my salary too small with him, he would not stand in the way of my bettering myself."

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# JOHN STEVENSON'S GOOD FORTUNE

## A NEW YEAR'S STORY

*(Continued from Page 7)*

"That was cruel."

"It seemed so to me, knowing as I did that he lived in a splendid house and spent for his family expenses twenty times what he allowed me for mine."

"Then you will not venture to ask him again?"

"No. He might discharge me, and as I have been unable to save anything, that would be too much to risk."

"Well," sighed the wife, "I only hope things will get a little cheaper. Otherwise we shall actually suffer. Johnny needs an overcoat badly."

"Yes, he must have one even if I go into debt for it. Is there any way in which we can retrench?"

"I am afraid not. We economize so closely now that I cannot think of any way."

Stevenson sat down to his supper. As he looked at his wife opposite, and his children surrounding the table, he couldn't help feeling that despite his narrow circumstances, he had much to be thankful for.

After supper he sat down before the fire, taking his youngest daughter into his lap. For the time, he dismissed all anxious thoughts and felt happy in his present comfort.

It was about nine o'clock when a ring was heard at the front door. As they kept no servant, Mr. Stevenson answered the summons himself. He was not a little surprised on recognizing his employer.

"Walk in, Mr. Green," he said. "I am glad to see you here."

"Thank you, Stevenson. I have got a little extra work for you — some letters which it is important to post so that they may go off in the first mail. Can you spare the time?"

"Certainly, sir. But how did you find out where I lived?"

"Through the directory. I was not certain, however, whether I had got the right number."

By this time they were in the little sitting-room.

"This is my wife, Mr. Green," said John Stevenson.

"Your employer, John?" asked his wife.

"Yes, Mary."

"I am glad to welcome you, sir, to our humble home," she said, putting out her hand.

"It seems cozy, however," said the merchant looking about him.

"Such as it is, we are thankful for it, sir."

"I believe you have children, Mrs. Stevenson."

"Yes, sir, four — the oldest, a boy of fourteen years."

Just before Mr. Green had come out he had run his eyes over his book of personal expenses. He had noticed the amount paid out for his oldest daughter's school bills and dress, and they came within a little of the amount of his book-keeper's salary. This occurred to him, and he couldn't help wondering how it was possible on such a sum to support a wife and family.

John Stevenson brought out his writing materials, and his employer gave his directions as to the letters to be written.

Just as he had completed these, Johnny, the oldest boy, entered. He had been out coasting on the common. He looked extremely cold.

"You came home earlier than you expected, John," said his mother.

"Yes, mother, I found it cold without a coat."

Mr. Green looked up. Although nothing was said, he suspected the true state of the case, and said —

"Why didn't you wear your coat?"

Johnny blushed.

"I have none," he said.

"His father has been meaning to get him one," said Mrs. Stevenson, "but we have had so many calls for money."

"Yes, I understand," said the merchant, who was really kind at heart. "That reminds me that I have an overcoat at home which I have laid aside. It is still in good condition, and if you think you could get one out of it for your son, you are quite welcome to it."

"It will be quite a help to us, Mr. Green," said the book-keeper's wife, her face brightening. "To tell the truth, it will relieve us from considerable embarrassment."

"Then I will send it over tomorrow, or rather you may send your son to my house for it. I may be able to find some coats and pants also."

"They will also be acceptable, Mr. Green," said Mrs. Stevenson, "and we shall feel very much obliged to you."

There was an expression of genuine relief and

gladness in her face, which the merchant noticed. He could not but think that their need must indeed be great, when they could welcome a gift of old clothes with so much rejoicing.

Mr. Green was not a mean man. He was only inconsiderate. As to the question of the salaries he paid, he had considered it only with reference to himself, not to the actual needs of those he employed. Now he saw that he had been cruel, without meaning it. He made a resolve that Stevenson, who had served him faithfully, should be better paid; but this knowledge he reserved for the morrow.

After a while he rose, and after mentioning a time when Johnny might come to the house for the clothes, he withdrew.

The next morning John Stevenson repaired as usual to the office.

"Did you post those letters last night?" inquired his employer.

"Yes, sir."

"I am glad of it. They were of considerable importance. I am obliged to you for the service you rendered me. I shall expect you to draw extra compensation."

"Thank you, sir, but the coat you have kindly offered to give my boy will more than pay me."

"It seems to me," said the merchant, glancing at the shabby garment, which his book-keeper had hung up, "that your own coat is considerably the worse for wear."

"Yes, sir," said John Stevenson, blushing a little.

"You ought to get another."

"I should like to, sir, but it takes all my salary to support my family. Things are so high now."

"Yes, true," said Mr. Green thoughtfully. "I suppose you would like an increase of salary."

"I should, sir, certainly, if it would not be asking too much."

"How much more would enable you to get along comfortably?"

"With a hundred dollars more, sir, I think I could manage."

"But even then you would be straightened?"

"Well, yes, sir. I hope, however, that prices will fall."

"We are sure of that, however. I think I had better pay three hundred more."

Mr. Green was not a mean man. He was only inconsiderate. As to the question of the salaries he paid, he had considered it only with reference to himself, not to the actual needs of those he employed.

"Three hundred?" repeated John Stevenson, hardly crediting his good luck. "How can I think you, sir?"

"By discharging your duties as faithfully as you have done hitherto. And by the way, the hundred dollars you asked for, you may consider added to last year's salary. Fill out a cheque for the amount in your favor, and I will sign it."

"I hope, Mr. Green, this will be as happy a New Year's day to you, as you have made it to me."

It was with a heart full of gratitude that the book-keeper said this, feeling a heavy burden of anxiety rolled off his mind. His hope, too, was likely to be fulfilled. Seeing how much happiness he had caused, Mr. Green felt his own heart warmed, and wondered why he had never thought of raising his book-keeper's salary before. When five o'clock came, he stopped at his desk, and said kindly —

"As it's New Year's Day, Stevenson, I think you had better go home an hour earlier than usual."

John Stevenson gladly availed himself of his privilege. He found his wife elated with the results of Johnny's mission. The overcoat was less than half worn, and

there were two very good undercoats, besides other clothes.

"I have been thinking, John," she said, "that as this overcoat is so good perhaps you had better take it yourself and get one for Johnny out of one of the under coats."

"That will not be necessary."

"But your overcoat is so shabby."

"I am going to buy a new one."

"But how will you pay for it?"

Then John Stevenson told her of his good luck, and showed the hundred dollar bill as an earnest of it. There was great joy in the plain little house that night. The children held high carnival, and were permitted to sit up two hours beyond their usual bed-time, parching corn and making molasses candy. I doubt very much whether in Mr. Green's own home New Year's Night was celebrated as joyously, but I do know that the merchant slept more comfortably for the feeling that a worthy family had been made happy through his means.

## Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

keyboard or anything."

Even though no survivors were found in the weeks following the disaster, the dogs led rescuers to remains that were subsequently removed from the site for identification.

"These human-and-dog co-workers are amazing," Janice Morley said. "Their dedication to the work that needed to be done is astonishing. They truly are some of America's heroes."

If Horatio Alger, Jr. were alive today and living in New York, I'm sure he would come up with a "strive and succeed" story involving rescue dogs. All he'd have to do is change the name of his heroes from Dick and Tom to Zack and Tammy!

\* \* \*

In a mood of holiday cheer, I recently made one of my periodic excursions onto the Internet to hunt for book bargains. Not likely.

American Book Exchange and eBay's Alger listings are notorious, with cheap reprints often overpriced or pawned off as first editions, etc., etc. So this time I decided to confine my survey to Edward Stratemeyer.

My first observation on ABE was a copy of the Stratemeyer-Alger completion, *Out for Business*. Not a Mershon edition, but a Grosset & Dunlap reprint.

This is the description: "Exterior is in good condition due to wear on the boards and spine, but interior is in very good condition as the pages are clean and the binding is still tight." \$85. Some bargain! I love it when dealers describe a book's interior as "clean" or "bright." That's the equivalent of describing a rusted-out used car as a "good runner."

How about this one? *Baseball Joe, Home Run King* by Lester Chadwick (Stratemeyer Syndicate). "Trifle soiled on front cloth pictorial, else fine." \$100. This is without a dust jacket, by the way. The dealer is listed as an ABAA member, so the price should be no surprise. This is a \$10 to \$20 item without dust jacket.

Another example: *Oliver Bright's Search*, Merriam & Co., 1895. "Edgeworn, spine is discolored, spine slightly rolled, otherwise VG." \$129. Merriam is, in fact, the first hard-cover publisher (but this is not necessarily a first printing). Again, I dislike it when a dealer lists all kinds of flaws and then says "otherwise VG." You should grade the book in totality. Although I haven't observed this book, it seems likely that its condition should be listed as good-plus or VG-minus. As for the price, even a VG condition Merriam is worth \$50 or \$60, tops.

The listing that provoked my biggest laugh was for

## MEMBERSHIP

### Change of address

Peter C. Walther (PF-548)  
P.O. Box 845  
Richfield Springs, NY 13439

### Roster updates

The new e-mail address  
for John R. Juvinall is [JohnWA9GXL@attbi.com](mailto:JohnWA9GXL@attbi.com)

The new e-mail address  
for Henri Achee is [achee\\_h@hccs.cc.tx.us](mailto:achee_h@hccs.cc.tx.us)

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*The Young Bandmaster* by "Capt. Ralph Bonehill," one of Stratemeyer's most popular pseudonyms. This is the not the Mershon hard-cover edition but Street & Smith's **Alger Series** paperback, a \$10-\$15 item. This dealer's asking price? \$135. At least it's listed as "near fine"!

I know the **Donald Dare Series** (Stratemeyer Syndicate) is rather difficult to find. This series of school sports stories is targeted at younger readers ages 9-12. The publisher of the copy of *Donald Dare, the Champion Boy Pitcher* on American Book Exchange is Charles E. Graham. The asking price? A cool \$350 for a "bright, near-fine copy" (without dust jacket).

Another ridiculous one is the \$95 being asked for a copy of *Oliver Bright's Search* in the LL&S **Stratemeyer Popular Series**. And this is the third format by LL&S, the one with beige, illustrated covers. In total (including two Merriam and two L&S printings), this is *at least the seventh* hard-cover format of this title!

Another title not very difficult to find is the LL&S edition of *At the Fall of Port Arthur* (1905), from the **Soldiers of Fortune Series**. A VG first printing is offered at \$150. This is a \$20 to \$30 book.

And so it goes. The day I checked, 500 books were listed, including Stratemeyer's own books along with a number of titles produced by the Stratemeyer Syndicate.

Many of these books are offered at full retail, which can range from \$8 to \$40 for a Stratemeyer-authored title, depending on condition and edition. Yet, there are way too many inflated exceptions, as noted above.

At least, on eBay, there is usually a scanned color image of the book's cover for the potential buyer to examine. And the prices are usually lower than those found on ABE, unless the seller has placed an unreasonably high opening bid or reserve.

But at least it's supply-and-demand rather than a \$135 asking price for an **Alger Series** paperback.

# Jolly Good Times: Mary P. Wells Smith and her books for young people

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

## "SPRING'S A-COMING!"

**T**EDDY and Millicent were out under the wood-house, cracking butternuts. As Mr. Kendall's house stood on a slight elevation, the ground sloped away behind it so rapidly that quite a space was left under the wood-house. Here the wagons and the grindstone were kept, and here the children often played in winter. This morning the sun shone warmly in on them, the drip, drip of the eaves pattered cheerfully down, and there was a hopeful, spring-like feeling in the air.

"I'll tell you what's let's do," said Teddy. "Let's

pick out a whole lot of meats and give 'em to grandma for a birthday present. Her birthday comes next week."

"Well," assented Millie. "We can hide 'em somewhere, and I'll make a nice bag to put 'em in. Then we can surprise her. Now don't you go and tell her beforehand, Teddy."

"You don't 'spose I'd be so mean as to go and tell, do you?"

"Well, you know you do always do tell grandma every thing."

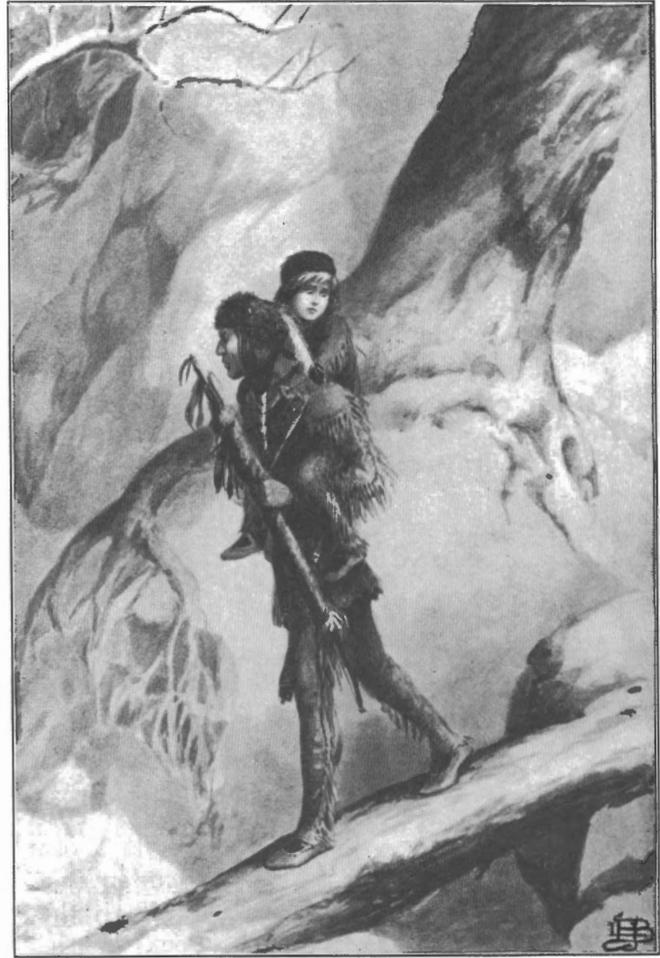
As Millie "hated" to sew, and always shirked, if possible, her daily stint of patchwork, the offer of the bag was a self-sacrifice grandma would fully appreciate.

Presently Teddy found an obstinate nut that would not crack. He lost his temper, an accident that happened to Teddy tolerably often. His round face grew red under the freckles.

"I'll see if I can't crack you," he said, with emphasis. "There!" And, setting his teeth together, he brought the hammer down — whack! On his thumb!

"Ow," roared Teddy, throwing the hammer half-way down to the corn-house, and wringing his thumb. "It's that old hammer! I never saw

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



THE BOY CAPTIVE OF OLD DEERFIELD  
He tossed the boy over his shoulder and sped on more swiftly than before. (Page 214)

such a mean hammer!"

"Never mind, Teddy," said Millie; "I'll crack till your thumb feels better," and she began cracking, or, rather, smashing the nuts, while Teddy went off with an injured air and sat down on a pile of boards, holding his thumb. But Teddy's temper-fits never lasted long. Pretty soon he began to laugh.

Thus began the professional writing career of Mary Prudence Wells Smith, a book titled *Jolly Good Times, or, Child-Life on a Farm*, first written as a serial in 1874 for the magazine *The Christian Union*, and published the following year in book form by Roberts Brothers of Boston. *Jolly Good Times* was the first of Smith's 20 books for young people, the first nine by Roberts Brothers and the remaining 11 by Little, Brown, the last one in 1918.

Born July 23, 1840, in Attica, N.Y., the daughter of Dr. Noah S. and Esther (Nims) Wells, she lived an amazingly long life for that era. She died Dec. 17, 1930, in Greenfield, Massachusetts, aged 90½ years, leaving an

(Continued on Page 12)

*Editor's note: This article was presented as a paper at the 31st annual conference of the Popular Culture Association in Philadelphia, Pa., on April 13, 2001.*

## Mary P. Wells Smith and her books for young people

(Continued from Page 11)

imprint on that historic village that remains to this day.

Mary P. Wells moved to Greenfield with her family as a child and lived there (with the exception of a few years following her marriage, mentioned below) all her life. Attending local schools, she was graduated from Greenfield High School in 1858. It was the first graduating class of that school, with only three members!

That same year she had her first stories published in the *Springfield Republican*. Mary used the pseudonym "P. Thorne" for these stories. It was the same pseudonym under which "Jolly Good Times" appeared



Mary P. Wells Smith (1840-1930).

in *The Christian Union*. In fact, the title page of the first hard-cover editions of *Jolly Good Times* and *Jolly Good Times at School* (1877) still carry the "P. Thorne" pseudonym.

When these books were later reissued by Little, Brown (which bought out Roberts Brothers), "P. Thorne" remained on the title page while the books' covers used Mary P. Wells Smith. In fact, all her books after these first two were published under her own name.

Following high school, Mary Wells attended Miss Draper's Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, before returning home to become an assistant teacher in the Greenfield high school.

Later, while still in her 20s, Wells was hired by the Franklin Savings Institution, and she worked there eight years. This was significant because she became the first woman ever to work for a banking institution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This was merely the first of many historic "firsts" for the woman who became known as the First Lady of Greenfield.

A writing career was still several years in the future, as young Mary Wells headed off to Philadelphia in the 1860s to attend the famed Philadelphia School of Design. Back she came to Greenfield, where she rejoined the faculty of the high school, teaching drawing. She then became the first woman to be elected to the Greenfield school committee.

In 1875, Mary married her widowed second cousin,

### JOLLY GOOD TIMES;



OR,

### CHILD LIFE ON A FARM.

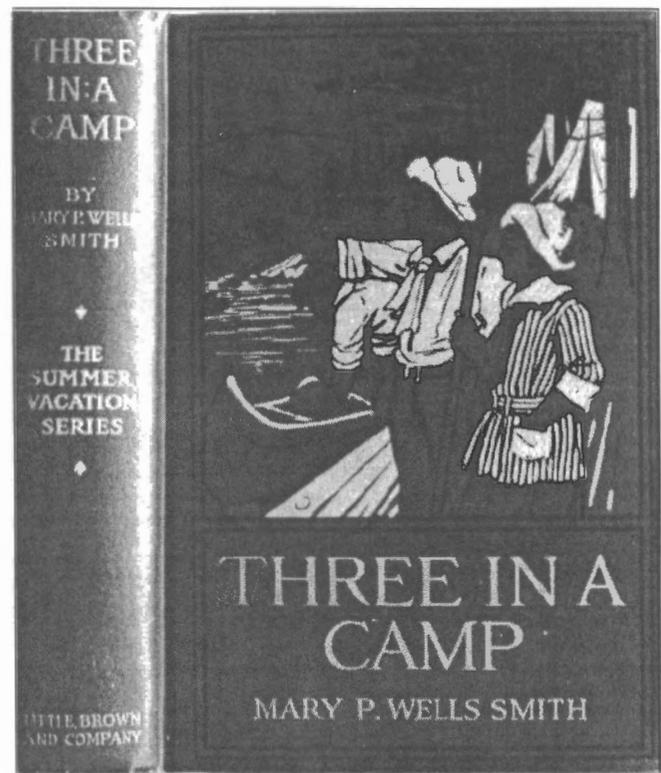
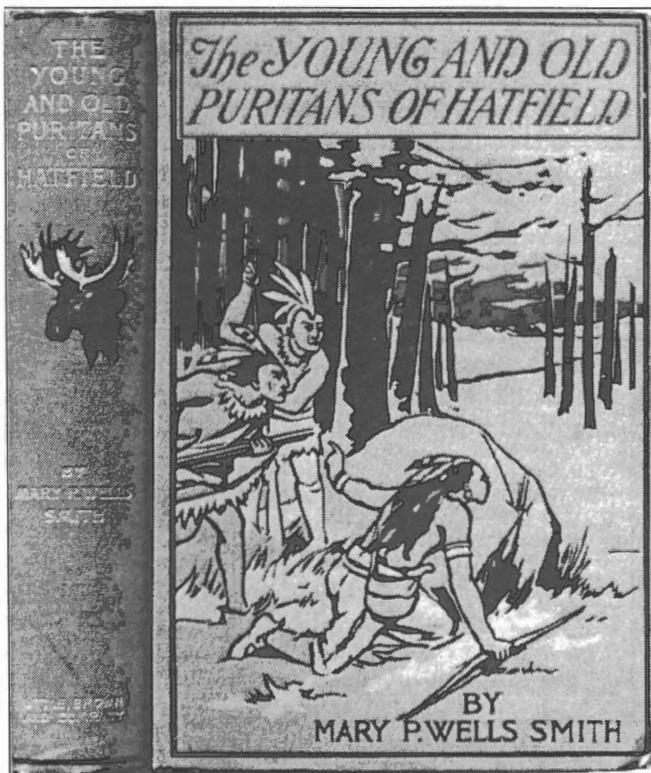
By P. THORNE. PRICE \$1.25.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

Judge Fayette Smith of Cincinnati, Ohio, and for a time they lived in the Queen City, but several years before her husband died in 1903, they moved back to Greenfield. Her husband, born in 1825 (15 years before his bride) came by his given name in an interesting way: his mother named him after the French patriot-general Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834).

It was in Cincinnati that Mary launched her political career, organizing the Woman's Club of Cincinnati. Upon her return to Greenfield in the late 1890s, she founded a similar club there and was active in it the remainder of her life.

As her community activities gradually expanded, Smith took over the presidency of the Greenfield All Souls Branch of the Unitarian Women's Alliance and held the post for 20 years; she served nine years as president of the Connecticut Valley Associate Alliance.



Smith's second series was the historical fiction Young Puritans Series (four volumes, 1897-1900) and her final series was the Summer Vacation Series (four volumes, 1911-18), a more light-hearted family series.

She was a Sunday school teacher in the local Unitarian church for 56 years.

But it was in the area of women's suffrage rights that Mary P. Wells Smith made her greatest fame away from her typewriter. In addition to founding the Greenfield Women's Club, she also helped to found the Greenfield Historical Society in 1907 and was elected president of the Equal Suffrage League, a post she held for two years.

The allure of writing was never far away, and it was the tales of historic Greenfield, the historic Pocumtuck Valley and the Deerfield and Hadley areas in the times of the Indian Wars that were a life-long passion.

In the excerpt with which we began, Smith was writing for a decidedly pre-teenage audience. The eight *Jolly Good Times* books are little known today, although reviews at the time were favorable. Here's an excerpt from a review in the *Saturday Evening Herald* of Chicago for the first book, *Jolly Good Times*, the one which first appeared in the *Christian Union* in 1874:

"It is decidedly refreshing to get hold of a story designed mainly for children, which is neither didactic nor sermonic, nor pretentious, nor absurd, nor impossible, nor highly wrought with an over-mature love story."

But as I noted, it was historical fiction that attracted

Smith the most. Here is a brief article titled "Old Deerfield in Indian Times," which offers evidence of her fascination with the Greenfield area and its rich history:

"My father was born on the old family farm on Shelburn Mountain, about three miles from Greenfield, and five from Deerfield. In his childhood, a bed was kept in a back chamber for the use of tramps short of money, who traveled about the country, expecting to be hospitably entertained at some farmhouse. One of these occasional guests was Old Uncle Asa Childs of Deerfield, who would now and then start on a country ramble, stopping a night or two at the Wells Farm House. Uncle Asa was one of the old Indian fighters of Deerfield. His arrival was hailed with joy by the boys who gathered about him, begging for Indian stories."

As a result, Mary had numerous sources for many of her historical tales. And there were others: her great-grandfather, Colonel David Wells, led the Fifth Hampshire County Regiment during the Revolutionary War, in battles along the upper Hudson River, which ended with the surrender of British Gen. Burgoyne at Saratoga. The immigrant ancestor of the Wells family was Hugh

(Continued on Page 14)

# Mary P. Wells Smith and her books for young people

(Continued from Page 13)

Wells, who came over from County Essex, England, and settled near Hartford, Conn., in 1636. His son, Thomas, great-grandfather of Col. David Wells, helped to settle the village of Hadley, Mass., in 1659 (thus, *The Young Puritans of Old Hadley*). Also, Mary was descended from Lieutenant Samuel Smith, commander at Hadley during King Philip's War (thus, *The Young Puritans in King Philip's War*).

Joining Col. Wells at this time were Thomas Coleman and Thomas Meekins, who were joined by yet another "Thomas," who happened to be one of the maternal ancestors of Mary P. Wells. This other Thomas was The Rev. Thomas Hooker, the first minister of Hartford, whose sermons inspired the "equality of man" clause in the Connecticut constitution. This clause was copied virtually into the U.S. Constitution during the formalization of the new government of the United States of America after the Revolution.

These ancestral roots lend obvious credence to how Mary P. Wells Smith became (1) a political activist; and (2) an author steeped in the history of the upper Connecticut River valley.

Once her *Jolly Good Times* books became a success, eagerly read by young people throughout the North-

east, Smith decided to write for a slightly older audience, and her eight historical novels followed in quick order. The *Young Puritans Series* appeared between 1897 and 1900, and The *Old Deerfield Series* was published between 1904 and 1909. Each series contained four volumes. The *Old Deerfield Series* was particularly successful, and the first two titles remain in print today as published by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association of Deerfield, Mass. The titles, *A Boy Captive of Old Deerfield* and *A Boy Captive of Canada*, are available

in the historical society's bookstore, or they can be ordered on-line by accessing [www.old-deerfield.org](http://www.old-deerfield.org).

The Historical Society of Greenfield, Mass., holds the Mary P. Wells Smith archives, including her portrait, many personal effects, book manuscripts and six of the original illustrations used in her books.

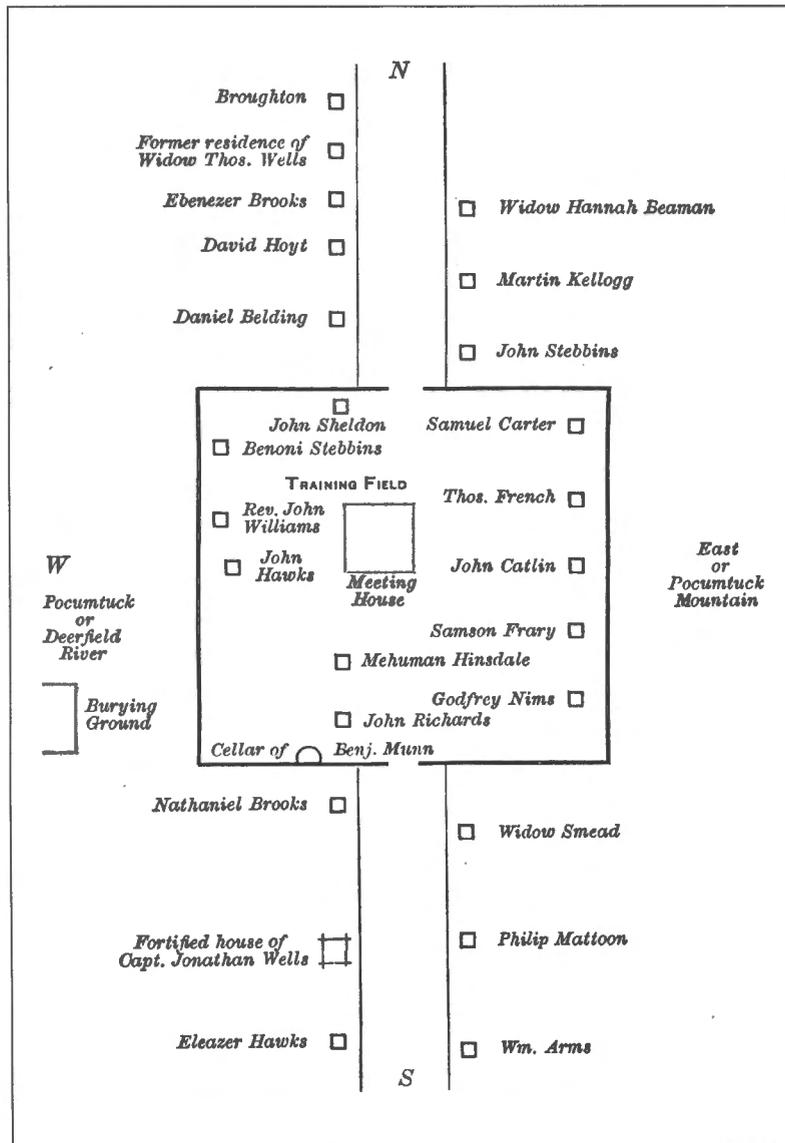
In mentioning the illustrators, I should note the famed artist L.J. Bridgman illustrated Smith's most well-known and oft-reprinted book, *The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield*. Bridgman also illustrated *The Young Puritans of Old Hadley* and *The Young Puritans in King Philip's War*.

Let's take a brief look at *The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield*, this most famous of Smith's 20 books.

The story is set in 1704, and it recounts the famous raid on Deerfield's settlement during the winter

of that year — the infamous Deerfield Massacre.

The protagonist of the story is 10-year-old Stephen Williams, a member of the Deerfield minister's rather large family. Although he enjoyed the outdoors im-



THE BOY CAPTIVE OF OLD DEERFIELD  
Plan of Deerfield fort and street in 1704. This plan shows the relative position of the houses but not the exact distances. (Page 23)

mensely, young Stephen and his boyhood pals had already endured a rough winter; they knew the Indian War was underway, and apprehension grew as he and his family (including a new baby sister) wiled the winter days away in their crowded cabin.

Then, on Feb. 29, 1704, the Williams homestead was overrun by rampaging Indians, the house burned to the ground, the mother murdered, young Stephen and his sister captured and their father bound, dragged through the snow. Taken into the wilderness, the native Americans try to convert Stephen to Indian life. The book follows his trek north toward Canada, and how he gradually adapts to Indian life through the building of a friendship with the young brave, Kewakeum.

The book leaves the reader (and young Stephen) asking the questions: "Is my father alive? Shall I ever see him and my brothers and sisters? Shall I ever escape from the Indians' clutches? Or must I live with them all the rest of my life, and become at last an Indian chief like my captors?"

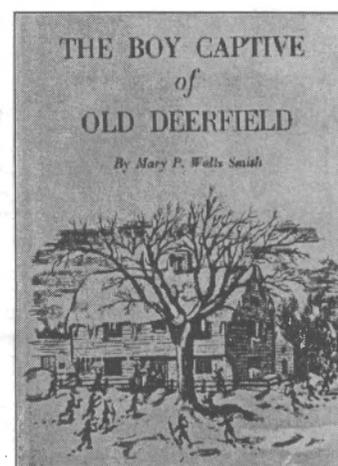
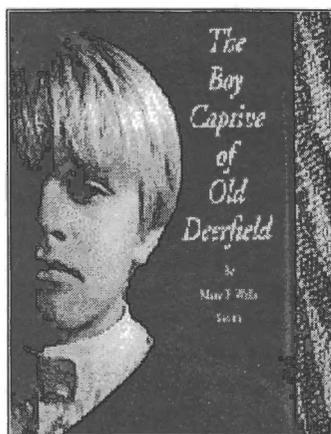
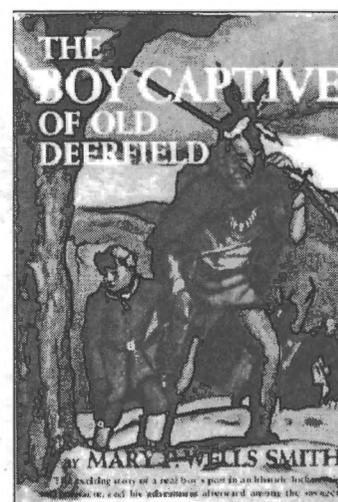
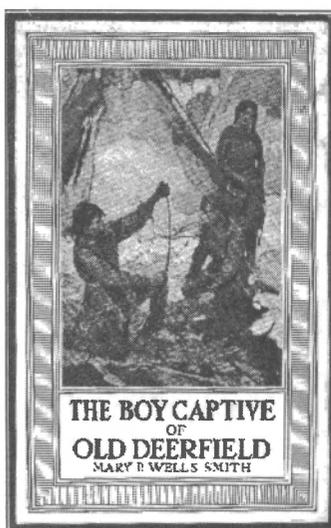
Mary P. Wells Smith, in true Stratemeyer Syndicate cliff-hanger fashion, merely says:

"A later volume must answer these questions; tell Stephen's further adventures; and the fate of his other Deerfield captives."

In the following introduction to the second volume in the series, *The Boy Captive in Canada*, Smith recapitulates the story of *The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield*, and then proceeds to set the scene for the further adventures of young Stephen Williams:

On the night of February 29, 1704, a band of two hundred Frenchmen and one hundred and forty Indians from Canada surprised the frontier village of Deerfield, Mass. The assailants burned nearly half the houses in the little settlement, killed forty-nine of the inhabitants, and carried off into captivity one hundred and eleven unfortunate men, women and children. Among the captives were Rev. John Williams, minister of Deerfield, his wife, Eunice, and his five children, two young children having been slain during the assault. Mrs. Williams, the wife and mother, was killed during the second day of the journey, being weak from recent illness and unable to travel.

At the mouth of the White River, in Hartford, Vt., the company separated. Mr. Williams, with his sons, Samuel and Warham, and his daughters, Esther and Eunice, were taken to Canada, by that trail so unhappily familiar to English captives, up White River into the Green Moun-



Smith's best-known book, *The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield*, has been continuously in print since 1904. *Upper left*: Little, Brown's Beacon Hill Bookshelf edition with color plates (1929). *Upper right*: John W. Haigis, Jr., Publisher (1953). *Lower right*: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (1967). *Lower left*: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (currently available).

tains, then down the Winooski to Lake Champlain. But Stephen Williams, a boy of but ten, was separated from all his family and friends, and borne off to the north by his captor, Mummumcott or Wattanamom, doomed to live alone among the Indians, and become an Indian, so far as his captor could make him.

With Mummumcott was his nephew Kewakeum, an Indian boy somewhat older than Cosannip, as Stephen was called by the Indians. A boy friendship having sprung up between Kewakwum and Stephen, Kewakeum persuaded his father Waneton, to purchase Stephen from his kinsman

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## Mary P. Wells Smith and her books for young people

(Continued from Page 15)

Mummumcott, Waneton, and his squaw, Heelahdee, were kind, in their way, to Stephen, and Kewakeum trained him in woodcraft. But his cousin, Nunganey, another Indian boy in the camp, of a sly and crafty disposition, delighted in teasing the white captive whenever opportunity offered. Katequa was the little five-year-old daughter of Heelahdee and Waneton.

The party of Indians with whom Stephen lived rambled about, hunting and fishing in Northern Vermont, for two or three months, until spring, and finally summer came. Near Cowass (*Ed.: at Newbury, Vt.*) they were joined by other Indians, with a few white captives, one of whom was Jacob Hix, a soldier captured at Deerfield, well known to Stephen, but now so wasted by hardship and starvation, that he was but a ghost of his old strong, manly self. Towards the last of July, Waneton and his band "set away for Canada," bearing Stephen with them. And here we resume the story of Stephen's adventures.

Even to the first-time reader, it is evident through their craftsmanship, along with historical accuracy and geographic detail, that these books rose from within the author's soul. Young Mary Wells' father gave her the following advice when she was growing up on the family farm at Greenfield Meadows, within sight of the encampment of the Deerfield captives:

"Always remember, Mel (his nickname for Mary), that the first camp of the captives taken at Deerfield in 1704 was there on Shelburne Mountain, just this side of the Mohawk Trail."

It is something Mary Prudence Wells never forgot, and the resulting four books in the *Old Deerfield Series* reflect that. We are so familiar with James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* and their stories of conflict between the white man and native Americans during Colonial times. The *Old Deerfield Series* holds your attention nearly as well, and is a tribute to the authorship of Mary P. Wells Smith.

After seeing such hard-bitten historical tales reach an eager young readership, Smith decided to return to her roots for her final series, the four-volume *Summer Vacation Series*. These are family stories for young read-

## Mary P. Wells Smith's books for young people

### The Jolly Good Times Series

- |   |               |      |
|---|---------------|------|
| 1. <i>Jolly Good Times, or, Child-Life on a Farm</i> (P. Thorne)              | Roberts Bros. | 1875 |
| 2. <i>Jolly Good Times at School, or, Some Times Not So Jolly</i> (P. Thorne) | Roberts Bros. | 1877 |
| 3. <i>The Browns</i>  | Roberts Bros. | 1885 |
| 4. <i>Their Canoe Trip</i>  | Roberts Bros. | 1889 |
| 5. <i>Jolly Good Times at Hackmatack</i>                                      | Roberts Bros. | 1891 |
| 6. <i>More Good Times at Hackmatack</i>                                       | Roberts Bros. | 1892 |
| 7. <i>Jolly Good Times To-Day</i>   | Roberts Bros. | 1894 |
| 8. <i>A Jolly Good Summer</i>   | Roberts Bros. | 1895 |

### The Young Puritans Series

- |   |               |      |
|---|---------------|------|
| 1. <i>The Young Puritans of Old Hadley</i>        | Roberts Bros. | 1897 |
| 2. <i>The Young Puritans in King Philip's War</i> | Little, Brown | 1898 |
| 3. <i>The Young Puritans in Captivity</i>         | Little, Brown | 1899 |
| 4. <i>The Young and Old Puritans of Hatfield</i>  | Little, Brown | 1900 |

### The Old Deerfield Series

- |  |               |      |
|--|---------------|------|
| 1. <i>The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield</i> | Little, Brown | 1904 |
| 2. <i>The Boy Captive in Canada</i>        | Little, Brown | 1905 |
| 3. <i>Boys of the Border</i>               | Little, Brown | 1907 |
| 4. <i>Boys and Girls of Seventy-Seven</i>  | Little, Brown | 1909 |

### The Summer Vacation Series

- |                             |               |      |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------|
| 1. <i>Four on a Farm</i>    | Little, Brown | 1911 |
| 2. <i>Two in a Bungalow</i> | Little, Brown | 1914 |
| 3. <i>Three in a Camp</i>   | Little, Brown | 1916 |
| 4. <i>Four in a Ford</i>    | Little, Brown | 1918 |

ers, not unlike the *Jolly Good Times Series*. The clever numeric titles, *Four on a Farm*, *Two in a Bungalow*, *Three in a Camp* and *Four in a Ford*, tell stories of carefree life at home, in camp on while traveling during the summer months away from school.

In a way, Mary P. Wells Smith had come full circle.

At age 76, she reflected on her long life (not realizing she still had 14 years to go):

Strong influences molding my life have been my puritan ancestry, my parents' training (of the genuine New England sort), a New England environment, and the teaching of the Unitarian church in which I was reared, and the writings of Emerson. As the end of a long and busy life draws near I feel there are few better mottoes for living than Edward Everett Hale's "Look out and not in, look up but not down, look forward and not back, and lend a hand."

As the sun sinks toward the western hills, I think, with Aldrich:

"In years foregone, O soul, was not all well?  
Still lovelier life awaits thee — Fear not thou."