



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 — 1899

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

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NUMBER 6

Master of his craft

*Frank Thayer Merrill
as children's book illustrator*

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An Alger story for the holidays:

Little Phil's Christmas Dinner

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Puppy for Sale? — an Alger-like street scene depicted by Boston artist Frank Thayer Merrill.

An early glance at 'Work and Win in Ohio'

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President's column

I am looking forward to the new year as I hope are all of you. This past year has been a good year and, as always, I am optimistic about the new year. My children are growing up fast and I do not want to miss any part of their lives. Both Sofia and Channing are now in preschool and doing well. Sofia is already a little lady, who loves dressing up as a princess and dancing around. Wendy and my sister took her to see "The Nutcracker" a couple of weeks ago and Sofia fell in love with the dancing and music. She enjoys drawing and painting and often surprises me with comments that belie her age. Pre-school is helping Channing to become more social and to grow his communication skills. He loves books and frequently reads to himself. Of course, we cannot understand most of his verbalization, but I hope his love for books continues to grow.

I hope that each of you has added a few choice items to your collection. We are all collectors and finding something new brings us joy whether it is a physical item that can sit on our bookshelf or a virtual item like a digital copy of an unknown item of interest. Here are some of the highlights that I have added this year. I purchased a teaser copy of the first five chapters of Horatio Alger's *Brave and Bold*, printed in *Dolly Varden* from a long-time Alger collector. The remaining chapters of *Brave and Bold* were published in *The New York Weekly*.

I acquired an elusive copy of *Luke Bennett's Hide Out* by C. B. Ashley (Harry Castlemon) in the Leather-Clad Tales format along with a bound volume of the 1872 *Our Schoolday Visitor*, published by J. W. Daughaday & Co. containing the serial copy of *Our Fellows* to place in my Castlemon collection. I added a few dime novels authored by Edward Ellis, a Horatio Alger CDV, an Oliver Optic CDV, and a couple of letters written by Oliver Optic. One of the most unique items I placed in my Oliver Optic collection was a copy of *Oliver Optic's 1872 Almanac for Boys and Girls*, published by Lee & Shepard.

This almanac is 6n by 9½ inches in size. The color cover illustration depicts the exit of 1871 and the entry of 1872 symbolized by an old man carrying a young boy on his shoulders. The almanac contains daily information relating to the sun, moon, and tides. It is profusely illustrated and contains many quotes, historic anecdotes, and small nuggets of information for children. It also contains a 13 page, double column story by Oliver Optic titled "Golden

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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of *Strive & Succeed* that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes. Our members conduct research and provide scholarship on the life of Horatio Alger, Jr., his works and influence on the culture of America. The Horatio Alger Society embraces collectors and enthusiasts of all juvenile literature, including boys' and girls' series, pulps and dime novels.

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at www.thehoratioalgersociety.org

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

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. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

Early glance at ‘Work and Win in Ohio’

By Robert G. Huber (PF-841)

The 2011 H.A.S. convention, “Work and Win in Ohio,” will be hosted by Bob Huber and will be held on April 28-May 1, 2011, at the Holiday Inn in Canton, Ohio. Located 10 minutes from the Akron-Canton airport, and just blocks off Interstate 77, the Holiday Inn has 193 guest rooms, free Internet connection, outdoor pool, exercise room, restaurant, and complimentary shuttle service to the airport. It is also across the street from the Westfield Shopping Mall. You can also fly into Cleveland Hopkins Airport (about 60 miles) or Port Columbus International Airport (about 130 miles).

The hotel rate is \$95 plus tax, and reservations should be made directly with the hotel at Holiday Inn Canton, 4520 Everhard Road, Canton, OH 44718; **Phone:** (330) 494-2770. Please identify yourselves as being with the Horatio Alger Society to get the discounted rate, and make your reservation by April 7 at noon. After that, the group rate is not guaranteed.

The registration fee for the 2011 convention is \$115. The official reservation form will be enclosed with the next issue of **Newsboy**.

Places of interest in Northeast Ohio include Stan Hywet Hall, the National Inventors Hall of Fame and the Akron Art Museum in Akron; the Pro Football Hall of Fame and National First Ladies Library in Canton; shopping and



The Pro Football Hall of Fame is one of the major attractions in Canton, Ohio, host city for the 2011 H.A.S. convention.

antiquing among the Amish in Holmes County, along with the Cleveland Art Museum, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Western Reserve Historical Society and Natural History Museum in Cleveland.

Several very good antique malls are within an hour's drive. There are several used bookstores in the area, including a very nice one in Shaker Heights, a suburb of Cleveland. More information on area places of interest will be available in upcoming issues of **Newsboy** and at registration on April 28.



*Best wishes
for a holiday
season of love,
joy and peace*

Editor's notebook

As we celebrate the holiday season, we should balance it with a sense of sadness, as recent issues of **Newsboy** included tributes to former Horatio Alger Society presidents Bob Routhier (PF-889) and Jim Ryberg (PF-533), along with longtime Partic'lar Friend Ruth W. Miller (PF-894), all of whom died within the past year.

We've lost several other Partic'lar Friends as well, several of them known only to your editor by the addresses at which they received **Newsboy** every other month. But among them were two members whom I knew personally.

- **Percy H. Seamans (PF-405)** died this summer at age 87. A resident of Lake Delton, Wisconsin (near Wisconsin Dells), Percy was one of my "must-visits" during annual book-hunting trips to the Dells area in the company of the late Neil McCormick of Madison. McCormick (PF-506), who died in 2003 at age 67, was a longtime H.A.S. member who collected everything when it came to books and antiques. We visited many antique malls and book dealers in central Wisconsin; I did the driving and Neil the navigating, and I found nice additions to my collection over nearly a decade of traveling with Neil.

One of our key stops was Wise Owl Books, a small shop owned by Seamans a few feet from his home on a Lake Delton side street. We would always phone ahead, because Percy was a regular on the area auction circuit, buying many box lots of books to restock his store, and we wanted to be certain he'd be home.



Longtime H.A.S. members Percy Seamans, left, and Neil McCormick, at their final convention, "Dash to DeKalb," in 1999.

Photo by Doug Fleming

In 1993, Percy and Neil traveled together to the H.A.S. convention in Fort Washington, Pa. Since we decided to make it a two-day trip to accommodate book-hunting, Neil and Percy met Bart Nyberg and myself at a Holiday Inn just east of Pittsburgh, and the following day our two-car caravan stopped at many central and eastern Pennsylvania bookstores, in such locations as Easton, Chambersburg, McSherrytown and Lancaster. We were extremely exhausted upon our arrival in the "Forging Ahead in Philly" hospitality room at Fort Washington (near Valley Forge) late Thursday afternoon. Percy and Neil brought many Algers and other books with them for the annual Saturday sale.

Percy and Neil attended their last convention in 1999, "Dash to DeKalb," hosted by Northern Illinois University.

- On August 26, we lost one of the Society's most loyal Partic'lar Friends, **Rocco J. Musemeche (PF-897)**, a longtime resident of New Iberia, La. He was 95, and still managed to send your editor a Christmas card every December despite declining health in recent years. One year in the late 1990s, his card was enclosed within a package containing a large, gift-inscribed bottle of New Iberia's legendary Tabasco brand hot pepper sauce. It took several years for me to use it up, because Tabasco is usually used a few drops at a time!

Rocco already was a longtime contributor to **Dime Novel Round-Up** and **Yellowback Library**, and just weeks after joining the Society he offered to write a piece for **Newsboy**. It was "Pranks: A Curriculum at Putnam Hall?" — a wonderful anecdotal story about one of Rocco's favorite series. We published it in the July-August 1992 issue, along with appropriate illustrations reproduced from the books.

I first personally met Rocco at the 1993 Popular Culture Association conference in New Orleans, just down the road from New Iberia, by which time he had been an H.A.S. member exactly a year. He offered to submit his PCA presentation for **Newsboy**. Titled "The Rover Boys at School ... Again, Again and Again," it appeared in the July-August 1993 issue — also with several illustrations from the books.

The climactic Musemeche contribution to **Newsboy** came in the July-August 1997 issue: "Miniatures on Diminutive Pee-Wee Harris," which he had presented as a paper that spring at the PCA conference in San Antonio, Texas. This was a key submission because it served as a prologue to one of our major projects, Percy Keese Fitzhugh's book-length story "Pee-Wee Harris, Warrior Bold," which had appeared as a serial in **Boy's Life** (November 1930-March 1931).

We ran "Pee-Wee Harris, Warrior Bold" in five parts, from July-August 1997 through March-April 1998.

STUDENT AND SCHOOLMATE

An Illustrated Monthly,

FOR OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

VOL. XX.

DECEMBER, 1867.

No. VI.

Little Phil's Christmas Dinner

By Horatio Alger, Jr.

"Do you want a boy, sir?"

Sitting at the desk in his office, Mr. Ambrose, on hearing this question asked in a pleasant voice, looked up, and his glance rested on a small boy, apparently about ten years of age, who peered in through the partly open door.

"Come in, and shut the door," the gentleman addressed, "and I will speak with you."

It was a chilly day at the close of December — the day before Christmas, in fact, so chilly that warm overcoats and furs were in general request. But little Phil had neither of these. His pants and jacket were patched in various places, his cap had originally belonged to a boy with a considerably larger head, and his shoes were greatly in need of cobbling. His small hands, unprotected by gloves, were very red with the cold, and his ears were tipped with crimson. But in spite of his shabby dress, little Phil had a very bright and a very pleasant face. An earnest, heroic soul looked through his honest eyes. He had learned to suffer and to endure without complaining. All he asked of the world was a fair field, but thus far the poor little fellow had been unable to obtain it.

"You had better come up to the fire," said Mr. Ambrose, "you look cold."

"Thank you, sir," said Phil, and he gladly moved nearer to the stove, and spread out his red hands to catch the warm glow.

"I suppose you saw the advertisement on the window," said Mr. Ambrose.

"Yes, sir."

"I do want a boy, but I need one older and larger than you. You don't look more than ten."

"I'm going on twelve," said Phil, unconsciously straightening up, and trying to make the most of his diminutive stature.

"Are you? But I need a boy of fourteen."

Little Phil looked sober. That was a difficulty not easy to overcome. He very well could not add a cubit to his stature or three years to his age. He had met with just this obstacle before, for he had many applications for employment.

"Do you reside with your parents?"

"My father is dead, sir. I live with my mother." Phil was just on the point of adding that she was sick and in need, and that this was the reason he was anxious to get a place but he hesitated, fearing Mr. Ambrose may think he was asking for charity, and he had a shrinking from doing that.

"Then I won't suit, sir," he said after a little pause.

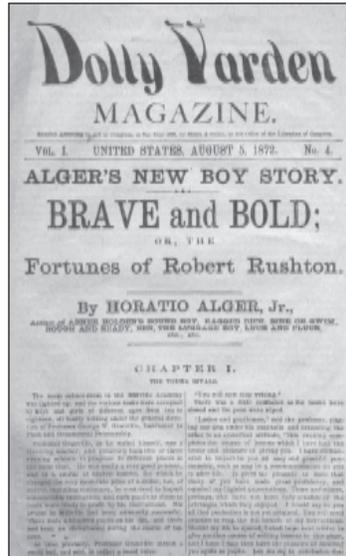
"No, I am not afraid."

Little Phil turned to go out, and the merchant resumed his writing.

He did not hear the door close, and it was only when the letter was finished that he was aware that the boy was gone. Then his heart smote him a little, for he was a kindhearted man,

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This story was first published in the December 1867 issue of Student and Schoolmate (above). Its previous appearances in Newsboy were in December 1969 and December 1971.



President's column

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Christmas; or, the Seven Sleepers of Cheat Street." There is also a 6½ page, double column story by Elijah Kellogg titled "The Way Miss Nancy Smart Bent Her Twigs. A Thanksgiving Story." I am not aware of either story being published in any other format. A play by George Baker titled "The Seven Ages," is included. It contains set diagrams for 12 different scenes. The Almanac ends with a heavily illustrated catalogue of books published by Lee & Shepard.

It mentions that another Almanac will be published in 1873, but I have never found a reference it another Almanac. I believe this was a one-time occurrence that may not have been profitable enough to warrant continuing publication. I would be interested in hearing about any later Oliver Optic Almanacs or any information regarding the short story "Golden Christmas."

I mentioned the items above to stir your imagination. I am sure that many of you have unique items in your collections. I would love to hear about them and possibly publish information and images in the **Newsboy**. You may e-mail me at doogie@lightbound.com.

I also met four of my many favorite authors this year: Nicholas Basbanes, Lee Child, Clive Cussler and James Rollins. They were each gracious enough to sign all of my books and pose for pictures. I enjoy meeting the authors, hearing them discuss their writing, and then having them sign my books. There is something about owning books that were touched by the author and especially when you can experience them in person signing the books.

I wonder if Alger or Optic had lines of people waiting to meet them and sign their books? I doubt it, based on the scarcity of signed books by any author from the late 19th century. I thoroughly enjoy the moments spent with the authors.

My daughter Sofia is fascinated with the moon. She looks for it every evening and is disappointed when the cloud cover blocks it from view. A few weeks ago we experienced a harvest moon, brilliant orange, large, and low to the ground. Wendy asked Sofia is she wanted to reach up and grab the moon. Sofia replied "It is too high Mama; I will need my stepstool.." We each have our stepstool: family, friends, hobbies, education, careers, the things we love and enjoy, the things that keep us happy and motivated to get up each morning. This Holiday season I hope that each of you takes the time to enjoy your stepstool.

Someone once said "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." I hope you have a Christmas and New Year celebration that takes your breath away. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Your Partic'lar Friend,
 Bob Sipes (PF-1067)
 1004 School St.
 Shelbyville, IN 46176
 Phone: (317) 398-0754
 E-mail: doogie@lightbound.com

Little Phil's Christmas Dinner

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and he had not failed to notice the boy's slender wardrobe.

"He must be very poor. It wouldn't have harmed me to give him half a dollar or so. I have no doubt he needs it." But the thought came too late, for Phil was half a mile away by this time.

Unfortunately the poor are too numerous in our large cities for the thought of one to remain long in the remembrance even of a kind-hearted man, so Mr. Ambrose continued his writing, and the day's business soon absorbed his attention, to the exclusion of everything else.

Little Phil made one more application, not wholly without good results. His application for a place was refused, but he was asked if he knew the way to Broad Street.

There were few streets in the lower part of the city that Phil didn't know, and he answered in the affirmative.

"Here is a letter that I want delivered immediately," said the gentleman to whom he had applied. "Can you go at once?"

"Yes, sir."

"There isn't any money in it, so it wouldn't be worth your while to open it."

Little Phil's face flushed at the suspicion.

"If there was a thousand dollars," he said, "and I could take it just as well as not, I wouldn't do it."

"All right, I hope you wouldn't, but you are a stranger to me, and I don't know whether you are honest or not."

"I'll carry the letter safe, sir."

"Very well. Here's fifteen cents to pay for your trouble."

"Thank you, sir. Is there any answer?"

"No."

Phil delivered the letter and as it was getting towards noon he went into a baker's shop and invested a part of his money in rolls. He bought besides a large, red apple, with which he

hoped to tempt his mother's appetite. Provided with these, he went home.

It was a very tall tenement house, the home of some thirty families, where he lived. He had five flights of stairs to ascend. At the head of the fifth landing he opened the door of a back room, and entered.

"Is that you, Phil?" asked a feeble voice from a bed.

"Yes, mother. How do you feel?"

"A little better, I think."

"Have you any appetite, mother? I've got some nice rolls here. If we only had a fire, I could toast some slices, but then we haven't got any butter."

"Never mind, Phil, I think I can eat one as it is."

Little Phil sat down by the bed, and the two ate their plain dinner. Mrs. Weston didn't feel quite equal to eating the apple,

though she tasted it and pronounced it nice. She was not dangerously sick, but had an attack of rheumatism, which the lack of a fire and other home comforts had aggravated. Under more favorable circumstances she would have recovered before this.

"Isn't it cold out, Phil?" she asked. "Poor boy, you must suffer with your thin clothes."

"O, I'm tough, mother," said Phil, cheerfully. "I can stand it."

"I wonder when our trials will be over," sighed Mrs. Weston. "It's strange we don't hear from your father's friend in Calcutta. He would help us I know."

"What was his name, mother?"

"Thomas Howland. Your father helped him to the position by which he has acquired wealth, little dreaming that the time would come when his own family would need the necessaries of life."

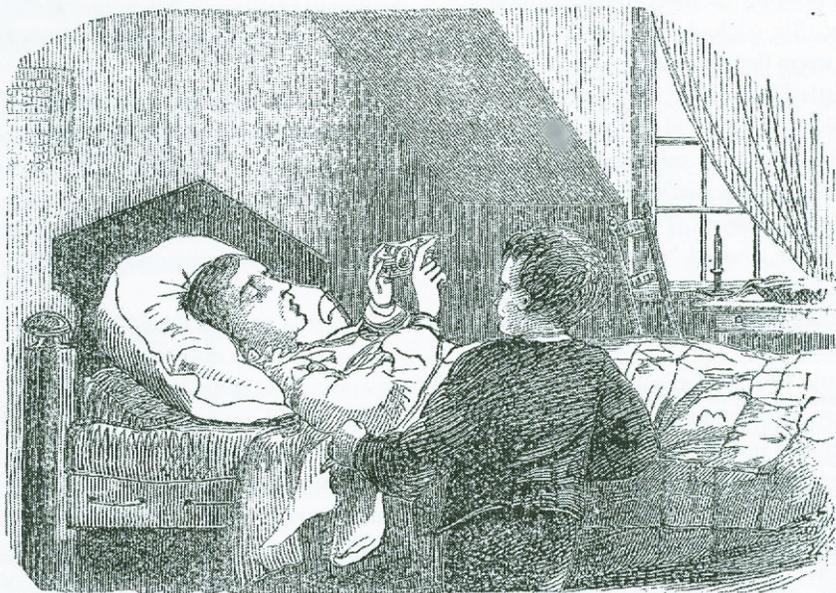
"When did you write Mr. Howland, mother?"

"Nearly a year ago. I hope he is not dead. If so, our last hope of earthly assistance is gone."

"Don't worry, mother, even if you don't hear from him," said Phil, manfully. "I will take care if you."

"I'm ready for it," said Phil, stoutly. "Things don't look very bright, mother, but tomorrow is Christmas, and something may happen to make it merry. I'm going out, this afternoon, and I'll

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LITTLE PHIL SAT DOWN BY THE BED, AND THE TWO ATE THEIR PLAIN DINNER.

Little Phil's Christmas Dinner

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try hard to earn a half dollar, so that we can have something good for dinner tomorrow."

Phil's bright and hopeful spirit was contagious, and insensibly his mother came to hope that something might happen by tomorrow that might make their prospects look more favorable.

Out into the cold streets little Phil went once more. He looked out eagerly for a job that would bring him the coveted half dollar. But hour after hour of the short afternoon passed, and still he remained idle. Six o'clock struck, and the long twilight had settled down upon the streets. The shop windows were ablaze with light. Little Phil paused before one of them, thinking how glad he would be if he could live as comfortably as the well-dressed people who were selecting presents for children inside. It was so cold outside that he thought he would venture in a moment to warm himself. There were so many customers that he thought he should be unnoticed in the throng. But a clerk espied him, and said, roughly, "Clear out of here, you young rascal; we can't have any of your thievish tricks in this store."

"I am no thief," said little Phil, indignantly.

"Then what are you here for?" said the clerk, with a sneer. "You did not come in to buy, I judge from your looks."

"No," said Phil, "I have no money."

"Then you came to steal."

"I didn't. I never stole in my life. I came because I was cold. I wanted to warm myself."

"Then go somewhere else and get warm," was the unfeeling reply. "If you stay here, I'll warm your jacket for you."

There was no appeal, and little Phil was about to obey the rough command, when a gentleman of middle age, who had listened in silence to the colloquy, said, "No, my little fellow, don't go out. Stay here til you are warm, and I will guarantee your honesty. The man that would drive you out such a cold night as this, deserves to be put out himself."

The clerk turned pale with rage, but did not venture to say anything as the gentleman had just bought several articles of value. As for Phil, he looked gratefully at his new friend, and said simply, "You are very kind, sir."

"Come here a minute," continued the gentleman, "I wish to speak to you."

The gentleman drew a little aside from the throng of customers, and began to question Phil.

"You are very poor, are you not?"

"Yes sir."

"Have you parents living?"

"Only a mother, and she is sick."

"Where do you live?"

Phil told him.

"Do you have a fire?"

"No sir; we haven't money enough to buy any wood."

"It is so warm where I have been living that the poor never suffer from cold."

"Where is that, sir?" Phil ventured to inquire.

"In a city that perhaps you never heard of, many thousand miles away, Calcutta."

"Calcutta," repeated Phil eagerly. "Did you know Mr. Thomas Howland there?"

The gentleman looked very much surprised.

"What do you know of him?" he asked.

Then Phil told him all about the letter his mother had written to Mr. Howland, who was her husband's friend, and how she had been waiting patiently for an answer, that had never come.

"Is it possible that you are my friend Weston's son?" ejaculated the gentleman with evident emotion.

"Your friend!" exclaimed Phil, in surprise. "Did you know my father?"

"I am the very Thomas Howland you were inquiring for."

"O, how glad mother will be!" said Phil, his face lighting up with joy.

"Did you get her letter?"

"No, my boy; otherwise it should have been my first care to answer it. You must tell me again about your mother."

Phil told the whole story now, and to sympathizing ears. When he had finished, Mr. Howland said, "I am rich, Phil, and it is mainly due to your father, who gave me my first start in life. Remembering that, I will take care that your mother and you shall never want again. And now suppose we plan a little Christmas surprise for your mother. You must induce her to hang up her stocking, and let her find this in it in the morning. Later in the day I will call."

He took out a fifty dollar bill and handed it to Phil, with a dollar besides to use at once.

With joyful steps little Phil hurried homeward, stopping on the way to get a little tea, and sugar, and bread.

"What success, Phil?" asked Mrs. Weston, as he entered the little room.

"I've got money enough to buy these," said Phil, showing his parcels. "I'll go down to Mrs. Connor's room, and get leave to make some tea by her fire. I know it'll do you good. I'll make some toast too. Wouldn't you like that?"

"Yes, I think I should, Phil," she said.

Phil went down, and soon returned with a small teapot full of tea and some slices of toast, which afforded a supper both enjoyed.

"I believe my appetite is coming back," said Mrs. Weston. "I feel better tonight than I have for some time."

"So do I," said Phil, smiling mysteriously. "I think, mother,

that our troubles are over, and we shall get along hereafter.”
 “I hope so, Phil.” But it was not in a very sanguine manner that she spoke.

“Mother,” said Phil, a little later. “I want you to hang up your stocking tonight.”

“What for?” asked Mrs. Weston, surprised.

“Because it is Christmas eve, and you may get a present.”

“I’m afraid there is little chance of that.”

“But you’ll let me hang up the stocking?”

“Certainly, my dear child, if you desire it.”

It occurred to Mrs. Weston that possibly Phil might have bought her some trifle, and for this reason she consented to his request.

When his mother was fairly asleep, Phil got up, and creeping to the nail on which his mother’s stocking was suspended, slyly put therein the fifty dollar bill. In the morning he was early awake. Dressing himself, he went to his mother’s room.

“Have you looked in your stocking yet, mother?” he asked.

“Not yet, Phil. You may bring it to me, but I think we shall find it .as empty as when it was hung up.”

Phil brought the stocking and his mother put in her hand. Her fingers closed upon something, and she drew it out.

“What does this mean?” she asked, bewildered. “A fifty dollar bill! Is it good?”

“I’ll bet it’s good,” said Phil, enjoying his mother’s surprise.

“Didn’t I tell you you’d find something?”

“But how came it there?”

Phil wouldn’t tell at first, but finally he explained how it all came about. But as the reader knows all about this, we need not repeat.

“Thank God!” ejaculated Mrs. Weston, fervently. “He has indeed sent me a friend in the hour of need.”

“Now mother,” said Phil, “we will have a jolly Christmas dinner.”

“I wish I was well enough to cook one.”

“So do I, but your sickness won’t prevent our having it. I know an eating-house close by where we can get some roast turkey and plum pudding for two. About noon I’ll take some dishes and go and get some.”

Phil did as he had arranged, and by one o’clock the little table was spread in the middle of the room, with a nice Christmas dinner, such as might have tempted anybody’s appetite. It was a great treat for Phil and his mother, neither of whom had eaten anything so good for many a long day. It was indeed a merry Christmas, and I know a great many fine houses where the day was not so happily spent as in that little plain room, up four flights of stairs.

But it will be useless to look for Phil and his mother in that little room today. They have moved into much more comfortable quarters, and henceforth their comfort is assured by Mr. Howland, who is both able and willing to help his friend’s widow and son. Little Phil no longer goes shivering about the streets but is warmly clad, and attends a good school, where I hope he is laying the foundation of a noble, useful manhood.

There are many little Phils in our towns and cities. Let us hope that God will send some of them a merry Christmas through the agency of those whose hearts are touched by the noble spirit of charity, which the day shall fitly teach.

*Editor’s note: The discrepancy of the Westons’ tenement room being up five flights of stairs when first mentioned, and up four flights at the story’s conclusion is reproduced here as it originally appeared in **Student and Schoolmate**. Charter member Irene Gurman (PF-0A1), who submitted this story to **Newsboy** in 1969, noted: “Trusting Alger will forgive Oliver Optic and me, for not dropping the other shoe.”*

New Year’s Day

By Horatio Alger, Jr.

The merry bells with joyful peals
 Ring in the glad New Year!
 What matter though the skys are grey,
 And meadows bleak and drear?
 Our hearts are warm, our fires blaze
 bright,
 Our homes are full of cheer.

The grandsire sits beside the fire,
 His race is well-nigh run,
 And near the low horizon’s edge
 We see his setting sun,
 But golden clouds irradiate
 The life that’s almost done.

There’s Charles just outside the door,
 With bright young cheeks aglow,
 Pelting his brothers merrily
 With rounded balls of snow,
 While Mary greets each lucky hit
 With laughter sweet and low.

From the tall chimney’s deep recess
 The curling smoke wreaths rise,
 And float on so many wings or air
 Up to the bending skies,
 A tribute from the blazing fire
 That winter’s cold defies.

O light-wings messengers of air,
 Bear up our thanks as well,
 That not alone when song-birds sing,

And coming harvests swell,
 Or roses load the fragrant air
 In meadow, grove and dell.

God’s mercies reach our waiting
 hearts,
 And fill our lives with cheer,
 But also when the winter sun
 Shines on the meadows drear,
 And ushers in, however chill,

*First published in the January 2, 1869 issue of **Gleason’s Literary Companion**, and republished in **Alger Street: The Poetry of Horatio Alger, Jr.** (Boston: J.S. Canner & Co., 1964).*

Strive and Succeed Award

*The Horatio Alger Society appreciates the generosity of its members in donating to the H.A.S. **Strive and Succeed Award** fund. The **Strive and Succeed Award** is presented each spring at the annual convention to a deserving high school senior to help defray his or her college expenses. The following Partic'lar Friends made contributions during calendar year 2010:*

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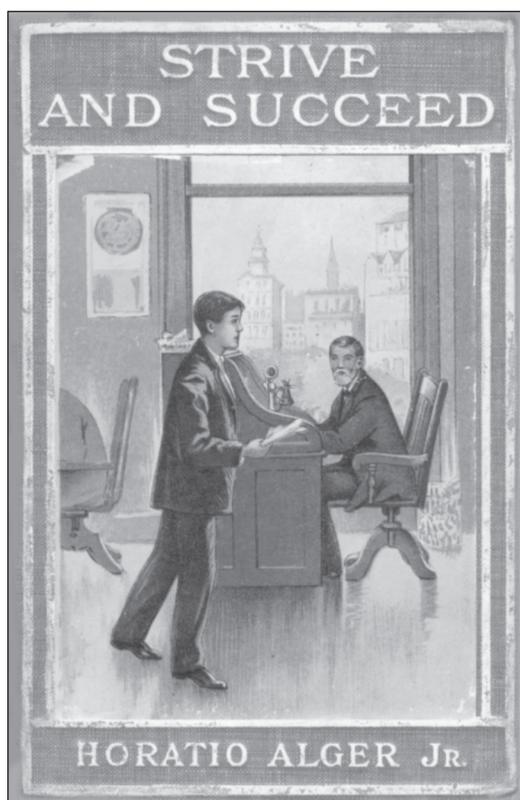
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*If you have recently made a **Strive and Succeed Award** donation and your name does not appear on this list, we will publish your donation as being made in calendar year 2011.*

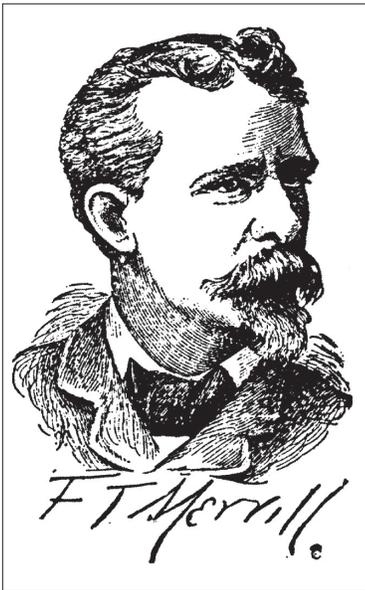
Master of his craft

*Frank Thayer Merrill
as children's book illustrator*

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

I must admit with embarrassment that in the early years of collecting juvenile books, I seldom paid much attention to the artists who provided the illustrations. Of course, most of my books at that time were popular Stratemeyer Syndicate series, and in most cases all I had to look at were a frontispiece and dust jacket, if I had been lucky enough to acquire the jacket.

Many of the Syndicate's books had internal plates,



but not Tom Swift, the Chapman Radio Boys, Don Sturdy or other prominent series in my collection. I had a few Leo Edwards books, but no dust jackets, so the unique artistic contributions of Bert Salg somehow escaped my attention. Syndicate artist Walter S. Rogers, with his many wonderful full-color dust jackets, was my benchmark for a successful series-book illustrator.

It was when I began to collect books by

such authors as Ralph Henry Barbour, William Heyliger, Everett Tomlinson and a whole bunch of lesser-known authors that I began to look at the work of the illustrators more closely. In the early 1990s, while on book-hunting trip to Cape Cod, I ran across a book titled *My Friend Jim*, by Martha Claire Doyle, written under her pseudonym "Martha James" and published in 1901 by Lee and Shepard of Boston. I had a couple of her books and found them well written, so I bought this one. The price was higher than I expected, which I guessed was because the bookseller had written in pencil on the flyleaf, "Illus. by Frank Merrill."



THE GRIZZLY MADE A VICIOUS SWOOP WITH HIS FOREPAW

This scene from *Pioneer Boys of the Colorado* (L.C. Page, 1926), demonstrates Frank Merrill's gift for dramatic detail in his book illustrations.

I assumed this to be a case of the "Joseph C. Lincoln" syndrome for those of us frequenting Cape Cod bookstores, just a typical inflated price for books by local or regional authors (in this case, an artist).

Anyway, Merrill's name was filed away until several years later, when the purchase of another book rekindled my interest. More about that later.

First, let's take a closer look at Merrill's life.

He was born Dec. 14, 1848, in Boston, the son of George William Merrill and Sarah Rose (Alden) Merrill, and was claimed by his family as being a descendant of John Alden of the Mayflower pilgrims.

Merrill attended primary and secondary schools in Boston, including Boston Latin, and from 1864-75 was a student at the Lowell Institute free drawing school. In 1875, he enrolled in the school of drawing and painting at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, having already es-

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Frank Thayer Merrill

(Continued from Page 11)

established a local studio in 1870 for commercial work.

Although he was adept at most artists' styles, including watercolor and oil, he decided to concentrate on illustrating for magazines and books in pencil or ink.

Merrill was married in 1881 to the former Jessie S. Aldrich of Boston, and in 1884 he traveled to Paris and Switzerland, where he created numerous sketches and illustrations. He wrote a book of his experiences, *Through the Heart of Paris*, in 1885.

It was prior to his trip to Europe that Merrill had perhaps the most important commission of his career as a book illustrator: creating more than 200 partial-page drawings for the 1880 illustrated edition of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women; or, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy*, a semi-autobiographical novel mirroring Alcott's experiences as a child in New England. How Merrill came to illustrate this book is a fascinating story.

In September 1867, Alcott was approached by Thomas Niles, a partner and editor at the Boston publisher Roberts Brothers, to "write a girls book." Alcott was hesitant, noting in her diary "I never liked girls, or knew many, except my sisters, but our queer plays and experiences may prove interesting, though I doubt it."

However, at Niles' urging, Alcott, then 35, plunged ahead, sending the first 12 chapters to Niles, who was suitably impressed to ask for more. Ten more chapters followed, and the final manuscript included a handful of illustrations by Alcott's sister, May. *Little Women* was published in October 1868. After reading the proofs and calling the book "better than I expected," she agreed to write a sequel.

Little Women was an immediate hit, and a second printing was quickly run off by the publisher. The sequel, *Little Women; or, Meg Jo, Beth and Amy (Part Second)* came out in April 1869.

There were legal problems in Great Britain, where pirated editions of both parts of *Little Women* were published without the author's consent. *Part Second* was issued in England under several alternate titles, such as *Little Women Wedded*, *Little Women Married*, *Nice Wives* and *Good Wives*.

To make sense of the public confusion over the title — and to solidify her rights to this best-selling story — in 1880, Alcott and Roberts Brothers decided to combine and re-edit the two parts into a single volume, adding a profuse number of illustrations. Chapters were re-numbered, typographical and editing errors were cleaned up, and Alcott's stylized New England writing and syntax were clarified in many cases for this



"Please give these to your mother."

new edition. This is essentially the book as it is found today in nearly every school and public library in the United States.

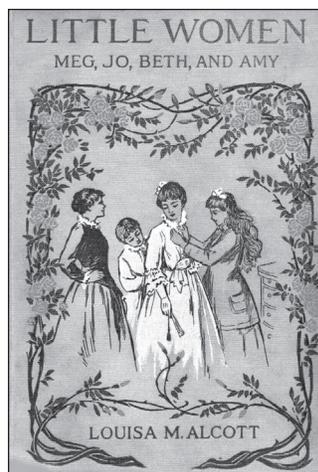
The artist chosen for this new 1880 edition was Frank T. Merrill. This came about after Alcott had expressed dissatisfaction with the look of the few extant illustrations (even those by her sister in the first part).

Shown below is the redesigned cover of the 1880 edition of *Little Women*, carried over to this printing in 1996 by Robert Brothers' successor, Little, Brown and Company.

Alcott passed judgment on each of Merrill's 200-plus illustrations, and a large number of his original sketches reside within the Alcott archives held by the Concord (Mass.) Museum. Alcott made personal comments to Merrill in the margins or on the reverse side of many of these drawings. Shown above are two examples:

For the illustration at the top of this page (published on Page 69 of the book) using the caption "Please give these to your mother," Alcott tells Merrill "*Laurie looks very much older here than in the other pictures. About right here & rather too young elsewhere. L.M.A.*"

For the illustration at the top of the following page (published on Page 435 of the book) with the caption "He put the sisters into the carriage," Alcott notes to Merrill: "*Good, but Jo is always made to look too old for her years.*"





He put the sisters into the carriage.

There are many more examples of the author's critiques. After Merrill presumably "tweaked" these illustrations, Alcott was obviously pleased with the published result, as noted in her memoirs, *Louisa May Alcott, her Life, Letters and Journals*:

Letter dated July 20, 1880, to Thomas Niles of Roberts Brothers:

"The drawings are all capital, and we had great fun over them down here this rainy day ... Mr. Merrill certainly deserves a good penny for his work. Such a fertile fancy and quick hand as his should be well paid, and I shall not begrudge him his well-earned compensation, nor the praise I am sure these illustrations will earn."

This is a fascinating glimpse at an author/artist working relationship that was uncommon at that time. Of course, Alcott's *Little Women* had been such a success, the publisher was more than happy to allow her more creative control over the combined 1880 edition, for which today's reprints still use Merrill's illustrations.

Merrill also illustrated a later edition of the next story in Alcott's "March family" series, *Little Men: Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys*, which was published in May 1871, and for which Merrill provided illustrations for a later edition. The third book in the trilogy, *Jo's Boys, and How they Turned Out*, was published in October 1886, just two years prior to Alcott's death at her Concord home at age 55.

In addition to his collaborations with Louisa May Alcott, Merrill illustrated noteworthy books for other famous authors, for whom various Merrill-illustrated

editions still exist (this is just a partial list):

Washington Irving (*Rip Van Winkle, and Tales of a Traveller*).

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (*Courtship of Miles Standish, The Song of Hiawatha*).

James Fenimore Cooper (*The Deerslayer, The Last of the Mohicans, The Pathfinder*).

William Makepeace Thackeray (*Vanity Fair, Henry Esmond, The Mahogany Tree*).

Edward Everett Hale (*The Man Without a Country*).

Many of these were turn-of-the-century popular editions published by Thomas Y. Crowell, a Boston publisher also involved with some of Merrill's later series books.

Another prime example is the first U.S. edition of **Mark Twain's** *The Prince and the Pauper* (James R. Osgood, 1882) for which Merrill shared artist credit with J.J. Harley. Shown below is one of Merrill's illustrations from that renowned work.

His first presumed series book for young people was *The Young Moose Hunters* by Maine author C.A. Stephens, published by Henry L. Shepard of Boston in 1874. This was part of the **American Homes Series**. Although no artist is credited on the title page, the frontispiece, showing boys taking aim from a boat at a pair of moose, is signed "Merrill" in the artist's distinctive hand.

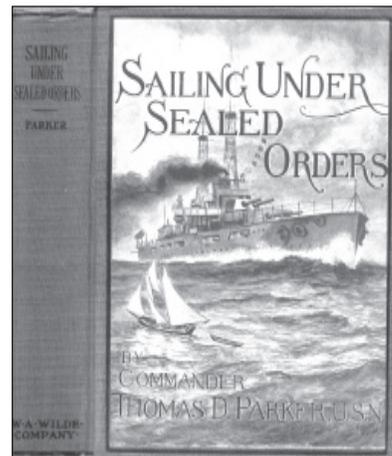
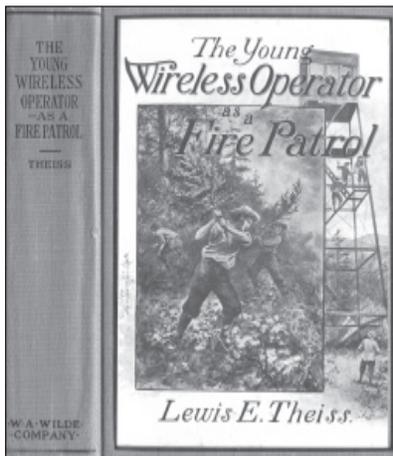
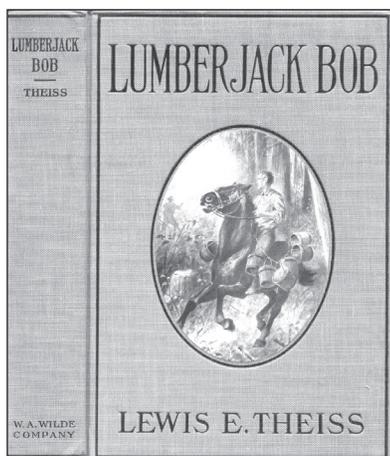


Most of Merrill's juvenile series book illustrations, nearly all of them for Boston publishers, came from the mid-1890s through the mid-1920s.

The book that re-ignited my interest in Merrill was *Lumberjack Bob*, by Lewis E. Theiss, published by W.A. Wilde in 1916. The oval appliqué illustration on the cover shows a boy on horseback at full gallop, with a string of several oak water buckets slung over the saddle. At first, I could not figure out what "Bob" of the title was doing, so I read the book only to find out he is hurrying to a forest fire. The text by Theiss matches the scene drawn by Merrill; it's evident the artist had access to the manuscript or page proofs.

Following are selected examples of several other notable boys' series books illustrated by Merrill. A sampling of covers with Merrill-illustrated appliqué illustrations are shown on Pages 14-15.

(Continued on Page 14)



Frank Thayer Merrill

(Continued from Page 13)

- Lewis Theiss' **Wireless Patrol Series** (W.A. Wilde, 1914-26) had nine of its 10 books illustrated by Merrill. In a creative touch by the publisher, the appliqué for *The Young Wireless Operator as a Fire Patrol* overlaps Merrill's drawing over a photo of an observation tower.

- The **Parker Series** by Commander Thomas D. Parker, USN (W.A. Wilde, 1917-21) combines Merrill's finely detailed images with photographs. Merrill did the final two of the four volumes, with *Sailing Under Sealed Orders* having a particularly dynamic cover appliqué.

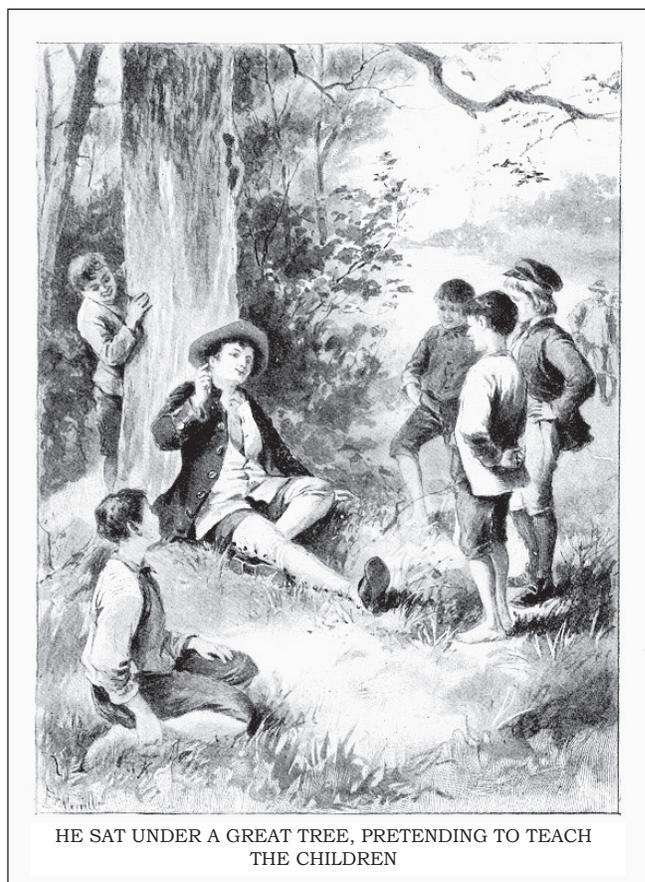
- Walter Prichard Eaton's **Boy Scout Series** (W.A. Wilde, 1912-34) used Merrill's illustrations for volumes 3-5 of the 11-volume series.

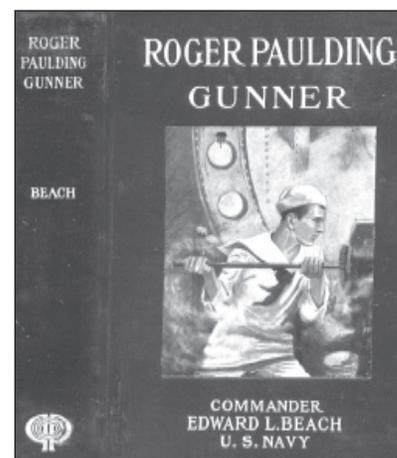
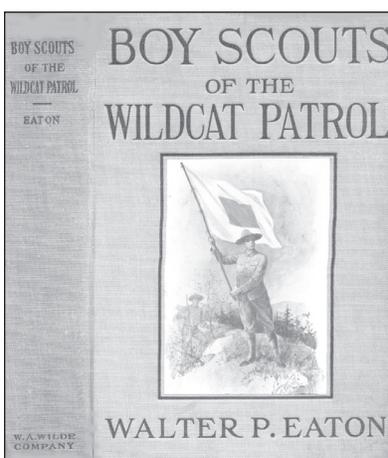
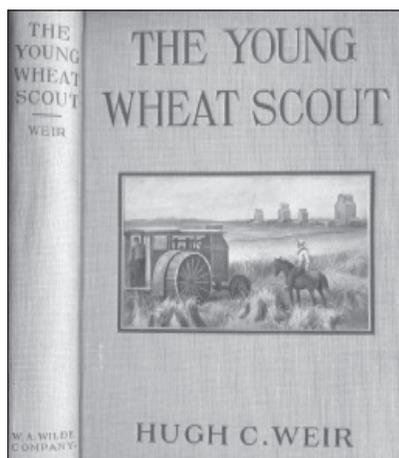
- The **Great American Industries Series** by Hugh C. Weir (W.A. Wilde, 1911-17) used Merrill's art for the final three of the five volumes. These illustrations were published in color.

- Edward L. Beach, a real-life naval officer, wrote several U.S. Navy-oriented series illustrated by Merrill. They include the four-volume **Ralph Osborn Series** (W.A. Wilde, 1909-12). In a rare case of Merrill appearing in books by a non-Boston publisher, Commander Beach's four-volume **Roger Paulding Series** was published by Penn from 1911-14. Merrill illustrated all four volumes. Penn also published Beach's **Annapolis Series** from 1907 to 1920. Again, Merrill illustrated all four volumes.

- Frank H. Cheley wrote numerous outdoors and Boy Scout-related titles for several publishers, including W.A. Wilde. The Wilde books illustrated by Merrill include *Camp-Fire Yarns* (1922) and *Mystery of Chimney Rock* (1924)

- Thomas Y. Crowell, a Boston publisher that, as previously noted, produced Merrill-illustrated reprints of several American and British classics, also issued series books. One of the most important was Sarah E. Morrison's **Chilhowee Boys Series** (1895-98). This illustration from Morrison's *The Chilhowee Boys at College*, shows Merrill's eye for detail in depicting a group of boys in the country:





• Charles Clark Munn's *Boyhood Days on the Farm* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1907), was illustrated by Merrill.

• Dana Estes & Co. was another Boston publisher using Merrill as artist. James Otis' *The Boys of '98* (1898) came out just a few months after the battles described in the text. Portraits of prominent American military leaders are interspersed with Merrill's illustrations.

• Yet another Boston publisher, L.C. Page, released several Merrill-illustrated books, including the non-series title *The Merrymakers of Chicago* by Herschel Williams.

• Page published the eight-volume **Young Pioneer Series** by "Harrison Adams" (St. George Rathborne). The last two titles (1926 and 1928) have Merrill as the artist. He came on board after the Stratemeyer Syndicate sold its rights for the first six volumes to Page, which published the final two titles on its own. Of the initial six books (1912-16), three were illustrated by Stratemeyer Syndicate regular Walter S. Rogers.

• Along with *The Young Pioneers of Kansas* (1928), the most recent book I can confirm containing Merrill illustrations is *In the Time of Attila* by Francis Rolt-Wheeler, copyrighted that same year by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard when Merrill was nearly 80 years old.

Merrill also did numerous girls' series books, illustrating many titles for W.A. Wilde. These included several books authored by Amy Ella Blanchard: *A Loyal Lass* (1902); *Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess, Schoolmates* (a sequel to Blanchard's *Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess*, which Merrill did not illustrate); *Campfire Girls of Brightwood* (1915); *Little Maid of Picardy* (1919); and *Becky* (1922).

Several years earlier, Wilde published Charlotte M. Vaile's *The Orcutt Girls* (1896), and its sequel, *Sue Orcutt* (1897), both illustrated by Merrill.

On May 13, 1886, Merrill's wife, Jessie, purchased, "... for One Dollar and other valuable considerations," the vacant land at 16 Tremlett Street in Dorchester (a town just south of Boston), with the property deed stat-

ing: *No dwelling shall be erected on said land to cost less than Five Thousand Dollars, and to be set back in the line of the house recently built by said Mansfield.* The third floor of the house contains a large studio, lit by a Palladian-windowed dormer.

It was at this house and studio that Merrill lived and worked the rest of his life. According to his obituary published in **The Boston Globe**, he died on Oct. 12, 1936, two months shy of his 88th birthday, and his funeral was held at the 16 Tremlett Street address two days later.

In 1966, Frank Merrill's grandson, John Alden Merrill, Jr., wrote a tribute for **Old-Time New England** magazine (Vol. LVII, No. 1, pp. 15-20), titled "Frank Thayer Merrill's Boston Sketches." Accompanying the article were several pen-and-ink or pencil sketches, drawn by the elder Merrill while wandering through Boston neighborhoods in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

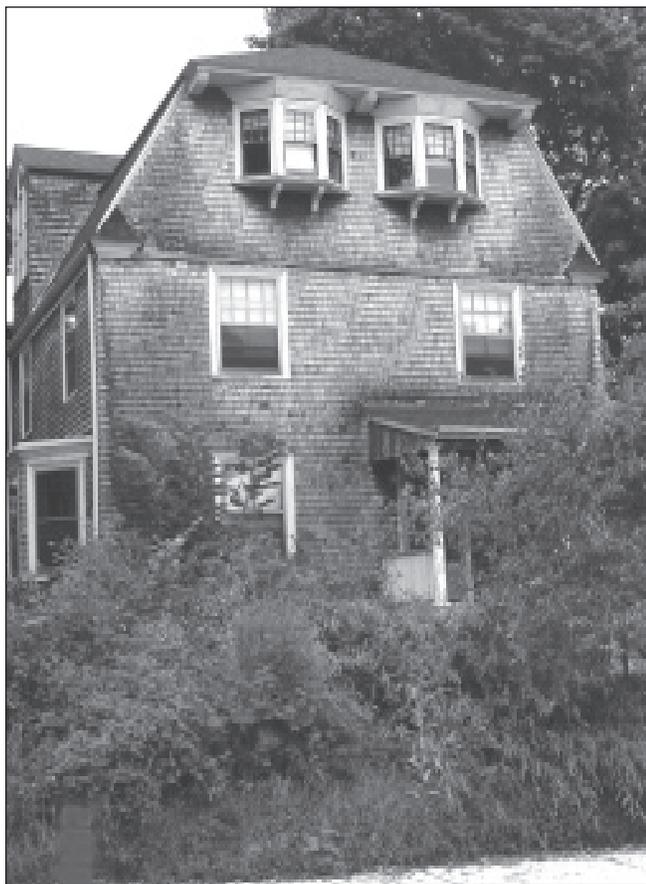
The complete text of John Alden Merrill, Jr.'s article:

Frank Thayer Merrill was born at Boston in 1848. His mother, the former Sarah Rose Alden, greatly encouraged Merrill's artistic development, and from her much of his talent is said to have come.

Young Merrill prepared at Boston Latin School from whence he studied at the Lowell Institute of fine arts. He finished his education with a tour of Europe, during which he studied art in Paris and spent much of his time sketching and painting in the English countryside.

Mr. Merrill was one of the most noted illustrators of his day. He devoted much of his time to illustrating standard editions of the English classics, such as Thackeray and Scott, and illustrating the original volumes of many American authors. These include Longfellow's *Courtship of Miles Standish*, Edward Everett Hale's *Man Without a Country*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, and Mark Twain's *Prince and the Pauper*.

(Continued on Page 16)



Frank T. Merrill's residence at 16 Tremlett Street in Dorchester, Mass. (just south of Boston) as it appears today. Merrill's third-floor studio remains as he designed it, with its pair of Palladian windows.

Frank Thayer Merrill

(Continued from Page 15)

F.T. Merrill deeply loved his native Boston, as indicated by these sketches of old Boston homes. He spent considerable time collecting and preserving American antiques, long before such interests were fashionable. His collection was invaluable, but unfortunately much of it has been dispersed.

These sketches have never been published, being among the small body of work done for the artist's satisfaction. They are reproduced here for their particular interest and significance as a pioneer effort. Few of the buildings depicted were outstanding historic landmarks. All of them, on the other hand, were highly picturesque, and it seems clear that the artist's interest lay in the direction of architectural rather than associational values. In this respect it is important to realize that his sketches were made more than a decade before the first drawings



This bookplate was created several years ago by the Boston Public Library to celebrate one of its special collections. It uses an illustration by Frank T. Merrill, vertically initialed "FTM" in the lower left corner.

by the English artist, Edwin Whitefield, and four or five years at least before William E. Barry published his *Pen Sketches of Old Houses* (Boston, circa. 1874). The Barry book and Whitefield's *Homes of Our Forefathers* series have long been considered the earliest concentrated effort for the New England area to record buildings pictorially for their architectural merits alone.

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Neil J. Morrison and his late wife, Meg Fleming, for providing the John Alden Merrill tribute article, plus the Boston Public Library bookplate and Frank Merrill obituary from *The Boston Globe*. Genealogy data on the Merrill family were researched by the Morrises and by James D. Keeline (PF-898). Information on Merrill-illustrated boys' books was provided by Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879), and titles of girls' books by Kathleen Chamberlain (PF-874).

• This article was presented at the 2009 Popular Culture Association conference in New Orleans, La., and at the 2009 H.A.S. convention in Charlottesville, Va.