



# 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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## 30 years later

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## President's column

### Collect your thoughts before you collect your books

Here in Nevada County, California, summer is over — corn dogs, quilting, swine exhibits and all. Things are starting to settle down. (I sound like Garrison Keillor on “Prairie Home Companion”.) So, as fall arrives, we’ve got a great chance to do “fall things,” like tidying up our collections.

Whether you collect Alger or other boys’ series authors, you benefit from improving your inventory. Here are a few of my suggestions.

- Get rid of trash. Like many other collectors, in the beginning, I bought anything and anything Alger wrote. That hasn’t turned out to be wise move. I just measured my shelves, and I realize that I have 318 linear feet of Alger books. Most of them are pretty bad.

- Give your great books a place. I keep my most precious Algers close by in my office.

- Upgrade. Senior H.A.S. members have beaten it into my head: quality is important! If you can ever replace a G copy of a title with a VG+ copy, you’re doing yourself a favor.

- Build the collection. Nobody can ever realistically complete an Alger collection, but maybe a little judicious shopping will help you fill some gaps.

- Clean up your catalog! I wish I had done this from the beginning. An Excel spreadsheet can hold a lot of information about your books, but if you don’t feel like using a computer, paper and pencil will work, too. Also, I wish I had slipped a 3x5 card with a little information into each book when I shelved it.

Now, let me say a few words about shopping. Buying Algers can be risky. In addition to *Caveat emptor* (Let the buyer beware) I must add *No raptus regaliter* (don’t get royally screwed).

The good way to buy is to know your Bennett and Gardner bibliographies, use the H.A.S. website (which has the main points for firsts), and consult with senior H.A.S. members. Buy at the annual auction and sale at the H.A.S. convention. The bad way to buy is to go out to eBay and Abebooks without a clue. Trouble is, the sellers at both sites are more clueless, and the situation never seems to improve. Here’s a brief tour for you: as of last weekend, eBay had 1,043 results for Horatio Alger (books and non-books). Most of the collectibles seem to

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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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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 advertisements 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](mailto:hasnewsboy@aol.com)

# 30 years later

## Reflections on the Horatio Alger commemorative postage stamp

By Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)

It was May 13, 1977. It was a cool crisp New England morning and glimpses of yellow and white could be seen outside as forsythia and dogwood trees proudly flashed their spring blooms. Waltham, Massachusetts, was beautiful this May but little did it realize then, and probably now, that it would forever be remembered as the location where an unusual birth occurred; the birth of a significant postage stamp — significant to us as Alger collectors, anyway.

It was on this day, at this place, that the idea of a commemorative stamp dedicated to the memory of Horatio Alger, Jr. was conceived, nurtured and given life. I was privileged to be there, engage in the discussion that day and then become part of a committee charged with finding out how a commemorative

stamp is selected and then actively participate in a comprehensive process to promote its being issued.

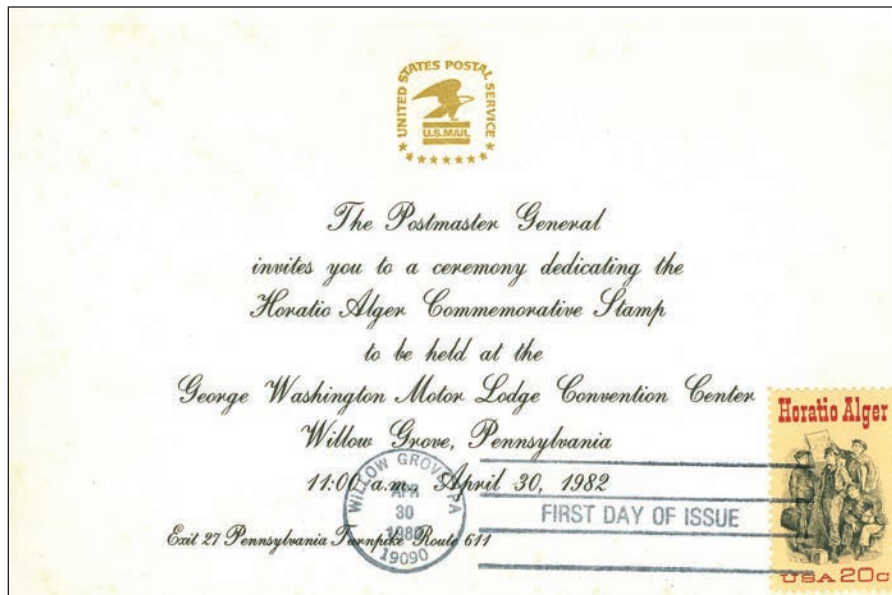
It was Ralph Gardner who observed at that annual meeting of the Horatio Alger Society that Horatio Alger would be 150 years old on May 13, 1982, and Ralph suggested the Society might pursue getting a stamp issued memorializing his life and accomplishments. After considerable discussion, then-President Jerry Friedland appointed a committee of five members to investigate the possibility of getting such a stamp with Dick Seddon, our Host at that "Booked in Boston" convention, as Chairman.

At first I thought it was just dream talk that would never lead to anything. However, the more we talked the more it seemed that such a thing might actually be possible! In the discussion, they had mentioned a proposal or formal descriptive package would have to be

developed and submitted to the proper federal agency. Two things clicked for me right away: one was that at the time I made my living writing proposals (RFP's) to obtain federal money for the State of Connecticut; and, secondly, I regularly made trips to the nation's capital every couple of months. That's when I thought I could perhaps contribute and said as much.

As a result, I became a Committee member which, as we all know, is what happens when one volunteers to do something. I don't think anyone in the room that day

thought that our little body of collectors would be a major national force and stimulant in having a commemorative stamp actually issued. Here is what happened from that point on as I can best reconstruct the events today, some 30 years after a stamp was formally issued on April 30, 1982. Be assured that my memory has



been refreshed by examination of several years of **Newsboy** issues that carried relevant articles and notations about the quest for a commemorative stamp.

First of all, a compelling argument in favor of getting an Alger stamp was that 1982 was, in fact, the 150th anniversary of Alger's birth. Ralph had been right. Everyone felt it was a noteworthy milestone that deserved recognition of an individual who had significant achievements.

We later found such an anniversary was a key criterion of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, a federal agency officially charged with making initial recommendations to the Postmaster General for commemorative stamps to be issued. Another major reason for stamp recognition would have to relate to Mr. Alger's long-term acceptance as part of our general American

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## Editor's notebook

This issue commemorates a commemorative — the 30th anniversary of the issuance of the 20-cent Horatio Alger commemorative postage stamp, on April 30, 1982 at the 18th annual H.A.S. convention in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.

I joined the Horatio Alger Society in 1983, so I missed this special event by merely a year. Brad Chase, who was president of the Society when the stamp was issued, told me over the years elements of the story of how this stamp finally got issued by the United States Postal Service after three years of diligent effort. The stamp came out in Alger's 150th birth year, or sesquicentennial, in the language of historians.

At this year's H.A.S. convention in DeKalb, Illinois, the auctioning of the Alger collection of the late Bob Wiliman gave me an idea. This was the 30th anniversary of the stamp, and Brad, whose latest book, *Thomas D. Hurst and his Publication of Horatio Alger Books*, was introduced at the convention, was an easy target — so I asked him to write a retrospective on how it happened "back then."

It took a bit of friendly persuasion, but he agreed offer his recollections on the history of the stamp. His article, beginning on Page 3, is illustrated with pertinent documents from 30-plus years ago, several from Bob Wiliman's collection. Bob, a serious philatelist who lived just outside Washington, D.C., headed the Horatio Alger Society's commemorative stamp committee during the final crucial stages of the USPS approval process.

You'll find full details in Brad's article, but at this point I want to discuss the Horatio Alger commemorative itself — a little bit of stamp trivia.

- **The designer:** The Alger stamp was designed by Robert Hallock of Newtown, Connecticut, on commission from the United States Postal Service. Hallock already had several commemorative stamps to his credit dating back to 1959's Oregon Statehood centennial, along with the 1970 Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial and 1974 Veterans of Foreign Wars issues, plus others. Unless I stand corrected, I believe the Alger stamp was Hallock's final USPS commission prior to his death.

- **The stamp's design:** As we know, Hallock based his design on the decorative engraved title page from Alger's Ragged Dick Series, originally drawn by Cuthbert Beede. The illustration shows, from left to right, Ben the Luggage Boy, Ragged Dick the Bootblack, Rufus the

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## President's column

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be first-day covers of the Alger stamp. However, there are a couple of interesting exceptions:

- Nice: "1982 Press Photo Horatio Alger rags-to-riches." A reproduction of a young Alger that APN Sunday Illustrations supplied to newspapers. \$8.

- Ripoff: "3 Horatio Alger, Wm W Cook, Rattling Good Stories SIGNS - 1910 — SET of 3." \$449.

- Overpriced Mexican knockoff bust: "Cast Bronze bust of Horatio Alger Jr. Award Marble Base by Ruth Millerick C '77." 3 available. \$400. Millerick died in 2010, at the age of 83. She did the bust as a commission from the Horatio Alger Association for its annual awards. And you'll love this responsible statement from the seller: "I am not a storefront so no warranties or returns." As Bugs says, "What a maroon!"

There are a few good books on eBay, but most of the others are bad. Try to avoid them.

- *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving*, condition Good. \$1,500. Faded cover and foxing.

- *Ralph Raymond's Heir* by Horatio Alger. First hardback edition. Lupton's Stratford Edition. \$200.

- *Grit* with DJ. Hurst & Company [ca. 1905]. \$365. Like many sellers, this guy screams "Vintage, Old, Original, Antique — NOT a reproduction." No, it's a reprint. And "Never offered on the market until now." (I should hope not!)

Some things never change. Abebooks has the usual \$6,500 copies of *Ragged Dick* and *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving*. As a bonus, Abebooks never has decent pictures.

You take some satisfaction in knowing that you have better resources and more knowledge than the folks who want to sell to you. Just be careful!

Your Partic'lar Friend  
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Direct all correspondence to:

Horatio Alger Society  
1004 School St.  
Shelbyville, IN 46176

# Horatio Alger interviews Milton F. Ehlert (PF-702)



**Editor's note:** On the 113th anniversary of Horatio Alger's death and his 180th birthday year, Horatio Alger returns to earth to interview H.A.S. members regarding their Alger collections. This the third in a new series written by an anonymous author posing as Horatio Alger. Enjoy.

**Horatio Alger:** Hello. Is this Milt Ehlert?

**Milt Ehlert:** Yes, it is.

**H.A.:** I'm only 180 years old now, but I'm doing pretty well.

How about you, Milt?

**M.E.:** Well, I'm hanging in there, doing OK.

**H.A.:** You do collect my books, correct?

**M.E.:** Yes, that's right.

**H.A.:** How did you get started?

**M.E.:** Well, it happened in the 1950s. I was a young teacher at South High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, when I was transferred to Ridgewood Junior High School to start a counseling program. A young boy came to see me for counseling services. He said he was called a geek because he liked to read all the time. I told him I liked to read also. His interests seemed kind of weird compared to the other students. He just didn't fit in. When I told him I liked to read, he said, "You're just like my grandpa." His grandfather was a Horatio Alger collector. He loved your books, Horatio. The boy told me I should collect Alger books, too. I followed through on that and contacted the then H.A.S. Executive Secretary, Carl Hartmann, and he piqued my interest even more, so I started picking up your books.

**H.A.:** That's great. So you've been collecting since the early 1960s?

**M.E.:** Yes

**H.A.:** How did you get involved with the Horatio Alger Society?

**M.E.:** Well, Carl Hartmann told me about it and I joined much later, in 1983.

**H.A.:** I see. What books do you collect?

**M.E.:** I have a couple of first editions, but I really go for the dust-jacketed Alger reprints. I have 77 of those now.

**H.A.:** That's quite a few. I didn't realize there were that many dust jackets around.

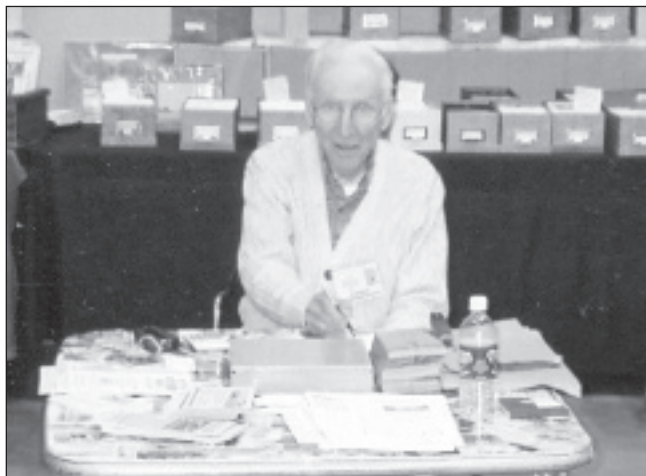
**M.E.:** Oh, yes. A number of them are the same title, but different publishers. You were published, Horatio, by a number of different companies.

**H.A.:** I've heard that.

**M.E.:** So I have several duplicates of the same title, but different jackets.

**H.A.:** What's your favorite book?

**M.E.:** I read them by scanning, because they are so simi-



**Milt Ehlert collects postcards as well as Horatio Alger and Michigan historical books.**

lar, but I'd say my favorite book is *Strive and Succeed* with Walter Conrad.

**H.A.:** Oh yes. That was the last of the *Luck and Pluck Series*. I always liked Walter.

**M.E.:** That was in 1873, and you know, Horatio, in later editions the heroes weren't always the same.

**H.A.:** Well, I'll be darned. Where do you pick up these dust-jacketed editions?

**M.E.:** Well, they're extremely difficult to find nowadays. I've only gotten a couple in the last few years. We used to go to antique malls and always pick up a few of your books, but not so much since about 1995 or so. As we got to the 2000s, it's just been very difficult to find them. I'm not a computer person.

**H.A.:** So, is your favorite character Walter Conrad?

**M.E.:** I'd call him my favorite.

**H.A.:** What else can you tell me about your collection?

**M.E.:** As I said, my real specialty is dust-jacketed reprints, but what gets me really excited, what really pumps me up is when I find a dust jacket that "marries" the book, where the jacket is the same as the front cover of the book.

**H.A.:** I understand.

**M.E.:** They're getting harder and harder to find. People switch dust jackets around because one might be tattered and torn, so they switch to a better jacket. Sometimes the publishing company will do that as well, but collectors do it, too. But, to me, that's a real find — a married dust jacket.

**H.A.:** Do you collect anything else?

**M.E.:** I do try to find other series books. Again, only if they're dust jacketed. I also collect Michigan historical books and Michigan authors. Your books, Horatio, are sort of in between.

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## Editor's notebook

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Newsboy, and sitting, Mark the Match Boy.

• **The Giori Press:** In 1955, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing purchased printing presses from the Giori Organizational of Lausanne, Switzerland, to enhance its production of postage stamps. After a period of early flat-plate printing in the mid to late 19th century, the Bureau began producing stamps on the rotary Stickney Press in 1914, which was capable of printing a single color of ink. When two-color stamps were desired, it required double the work — two passes through the press. This led occasionally to “inverted image” errors, such as the extremely scarce 24-cent, 1918 airmail stamp in which the blue central image of a Curtiss “Jenny” biplane was printed upside down within the stamp’s red frame.

The Bureau wanted to avoid such errors, and the Giori Press did that by printing up to three colors on a single pass of paper through the press. The Giori Press uses the intaglio method of printing (as opposed to gravure and digital photo-offset lithography common with today’s stamps). In the intaglio process, the image is textile, not unlike our paper currency, on which sensitive fingers can slightly feel the raised ink image. Giori Press stamps dominated U.S. postage for about three decades, beginning with the 48-star U.S. flag commemorative issued July 4, 1957, the stamp captioned “Long May it Wave.”

• **Paper color:** The Horatio Alger stamp has another distinctive feature—it is printed on warm-tan paper stock which, in effect, adds a third hue to the color scheme in addition to the red lettering and black illustration. Color printing stock was introduced by the USPS with the Princeton University/Nassau Hall 3-cent issue in 1956 (orange-yellow paper), and it continued with several non-white-paper issues over the next 26 years. The Horatio Alger stamp is significant because it was the last stamp of the Giori Press era printed on colored paper stock.

• **Number of stamps issued:** The press run of the Alger stamp was 107,605,000, divided into press sheets of 200 stamps, which were cut into panes of 50 for sale at post offices. The official Scott U.S. Stamp Catalogue number for the Alger stamp is 2010.

• **First Day of Issue covers:** On pages 10-11 are displayed sixteen first-day covers, or cachets, which were placed on sale at Willow Grove in conjunction with the stamp’s introduction. Various vendors can offer such cachets, but I should mention that five of these sixteen are “official” ones, co-endorsed by the Horatio Alger Society and Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans. This “Official Cachet” notice can be seen in the lower-left corner of the appropriate images.

The Horatio Alger Society should be proud of this stamp. In the years since it came out, numerous commemoratives honoring American literary giants have been issued, and few of them are as attractive as the design created by Robert Hallock 30-plus years ago.

## Horatio Alger interviews Milton F. Ehlert (PF-702)

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They’re not all series books. You’re a guy out there all by yourself, with your own category.

**H.A.:** *I see. You’re retired now?*

**M.E.:** I’m retired, but I have a passion going now. I pick up books and mainly postcards now. I try to sell some when I can. I’m interested in postcards from 1893 to 1920 — the historical ones. They started about the time you died, Horatio. They’re getting harder to re-sell these days. Everything is being sold electronically and I’m not into that — the Internet. Your books can be found in E-book form with no problem at all.

**H.A.:** *I know about the internet — what a shame for book lovers!*

**M.E.:** Yes, it pains me too. I like to have the actual book in my hand. These electronic devices, Ipods and the like, just aren’t kosher to me.

**H.A.:** *What did you teach before you retired?*

**M.E.:** I was mostly a school counselor, but I taught English, History and Math before that. You’re talking a long time ago

now. I’m 82 years old.

**H.A.:** *Gosh, you’re almost half as old as I am!*

**M.E.:** I’m getting there. I’m not that far behind you.

**H.A.:** *But you’re still collecting and selling books and postcards.*

**M.E.:** Somehow, it gets in your blood, but with the electronic business, it gets harder and harder.

**H.A.:** *Is there anything you’d like to ask me, Milt?*

**M.E.:** I wonder how you got interested in writing? I know you started out as a minister.

**H.A.:** *Well, I always enjoyed writing. When I was at Harvard, I did quite a bit of writing — poems, short stories. I even wrote some stuff in the Greek language. But I think the success of Ragged Dick really energized me. What a kick, I just couldn’t stop writing those books — like your favorite, Strive and Succeed. That says it all.*

**M.E.:** I totally understand.

**H.A.:** *I’ve enjoyed talking to you, Milt.*

**M.E.:** Thanks so much, Horatio.

**H.A.:** *Take care.*

# 30 years later

## Reflections on the Horatio Alger commemorative postage stamp

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heritage, culture and tradition.

All of us learn in growing up that somehow hard work, honesty, and other individual attributes will lead to the achievement of the beloved and respected "American Dream." "So-and-so's life is a true Horatio Alger Story" has been repeated over and over by thousands of writers, and Alger's name has become synonymous in our culture with a person who started with nothing, worked hard and achieved success. In May 1977, as we discussed the possibility of a commemorative stamp for Horatio Alger, these thoughts swirled around in our heads, and actually getting one seemed more and more possible to me.

"Time is too short and it will take forever to get a stamp," the naysayers said. "We'd need all kinds of political pull; we're just a tiny organization with a small budget," others moaned. However, cautious enthusiasm for the idea seemed to slowly emerge in the room that day, and the Committee marched forward with its charge. Actually, if truth be known now, I felt a certain sense of hopelessness and a picture began to form in my head of Don Quixote ready to attack what seemed to be an almost impenetrable federal stamp-approval windmill (i.e. bureaucracy). So with mixed emotions, we went forward with a charge to investigate exactly how one goes about getting a stamp for someone or something at the National level. We were neophytes in the world of stamps, but that fact only urged us forward. Besides, we had five years to work on it.

Looking back now some 30 years later, all the actions that led to the actual issuance of the stamp sort of meld into three major categories: (1), development and production of a proposal; (2), initiation of a political contact campaign; and (3), stroking the philatelist world to ensure procedure and protocol was followed correctly within the general stamp community.

As it turned out, my role was essentially to find out how one obtains a stamp, to develop and submit a proposal that followed relevant rules and then nurse and cheer as others worked hard to push all the right buttons. It was an adventure where excitement and disappointment abounded, but in the true Horatio Alger spirit, our determination (and lots of luck) ultimately prevailed. Here is how it went.

The initial H.A.S. committee was small, just five of us with Dick Seddon designated as Chairman (Gil Westgard,

Jerry Friedland, Max Goldberg, Dick and myself). Dick insisted that all H.A.S. members living in Massachusetts would also belong on the committee, but it never worked out that way. In fact, because Dick and I were in constant close contact, the working core initially became just the two of us. Then, it was so slow going that the two of us agreed that Dick would concentrate on new membership activities for the Society and I would pursue the stamp, reporting my progress to him and the others, particularly Jerry, who was then President of the Society.

During several visits to Washington, D.C. that first year, I visited the U.S. Postal Service Building and located the staff of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), an advisory body charged by statute with making periodic commemorative (and other) stamp recommendations to the Postmaster General. I found the staff was cordial, informative and helpful, but to some extent discouraging. Their standard line was: they get 4,000 requests for commemorative stamps each year, of those about 1,500 meet their criteria and only about 20 were actually chosen. In other words, getting a stamp is a formidable task and our chance of getting one issued was felt to be slim. The Advisory Committee's staff gave me the list of qualifying criteria, plus all necessary information needed to meet their requirements for a proposal. We were off and running!

I finished developing the proposal after many phone calls to H.A.S. members and presented it at the next H.A.S. convention in Jacksonville, Illinois, in May 1978. All 24 pages of the proposal were extensively reviewed there and used as the basis for a Resolution of Endorsement passed at that Annual Meeting. The full package was formally submitted right away to the CSAC in Washington during one of my visits there for consideration at its upcoming and scheduled July meeting.

Incidentally, as part of the package we included two or three potential stamp designs, one of which was chosen for the final stamp image. Later that summer we learned that the submittal "had not been recommended" by the Committee. The package was found to be complete and acceptable, but the Committee felt other proposals were more deserving at that time.

That news reverberated within H.A.S. like a ping-pong ball and stimulated our members generally to double their efforts because we found that the Committee en-

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## Reflections on the Horatio Alger commemorative postage stamp

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tertained re-submittals as a matter of practice.

During this time Helen M. Gray of the Horatio Alger Awards Committee (today known as the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans) and Ralph Gardner were heavily involved in promoting the stamp and championing the Society's publicity efforts by contacting as many influential people that came to mind. I had met Helen in New York City on one of my work trips there and had explained our efforts to her one delightful day over lunch. She and Ralph had certainly picked up the ball and run with it. Jack Bales, Editor of *Newsboy* at that time, and Carl Hartmann, H.A.S. Executive Secretary, provided sample letters in *Newsboy* and elsewhere for members (and anyone, actually) to send to their Senators and Representatives extolling the merits of the stamp.

Ralph Gardner also used his access to public radio and his national public writing and speaking engagements as opportunities to promote the stamp.

By all of these efforts that extended well over the next 22 months, it was clear that a full-fledged stamp promotional campaign was underway. However, little did we realize that one very important ingredient for such a campaign to be successful was missing: the inclusion of the philatelic world, i.e. the mystical world of stamp collecting. Enter Mr. Bob Williman, H.A.S. member and

stamp aficionado from Bowie, Maryland.

When the H.A.S. "Cleveland Connection" annual convention met in May 1979, a whole slew of publicity efforts seemed to be progressing well. At that annual meeting, H.A.S. members wrestled with how to intensify these efforts, because we knew time was ticking off and we needed to make more noise and ring more meaningful bells.

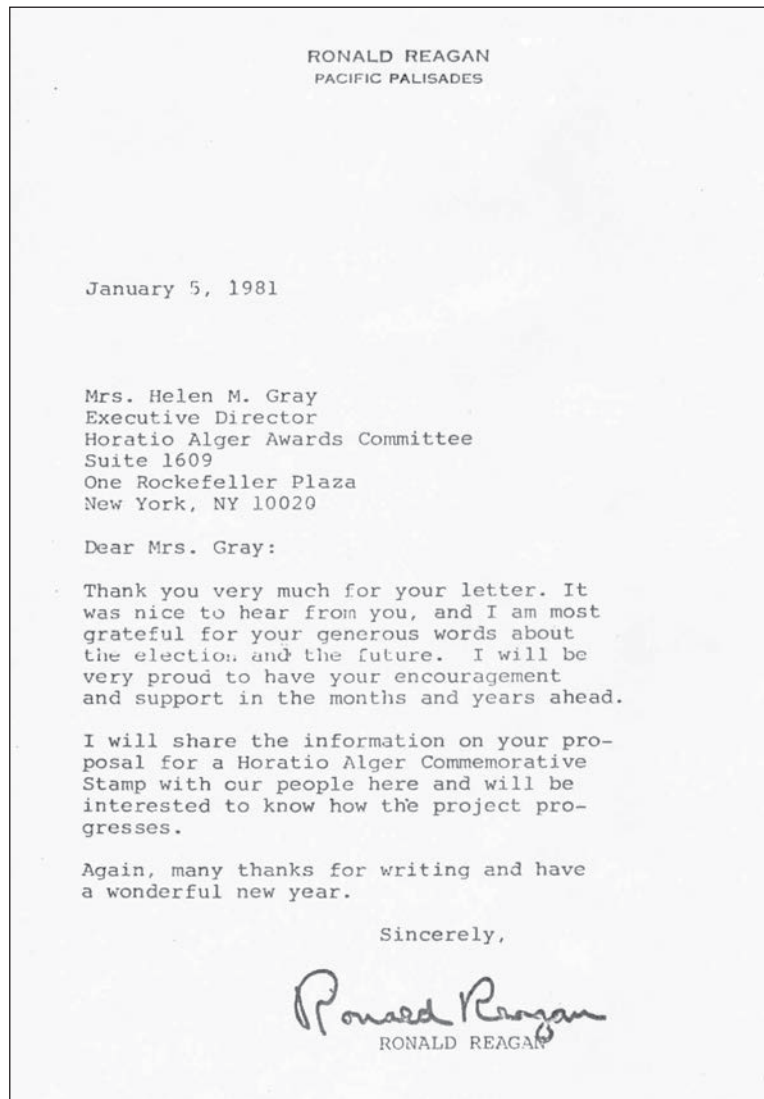
Two things of significance happened at that meeting: (1), it was decided that copies of Ralph's latest book would

be given to each of the Stamp Advisory Committee members; and (2), Bob Williman volunteered his services as both an Alger devotee and an avid stamp collector and dealer of long standing. Because I was soon to assume Presidency of H.A.S. and because of Bob's intense interest in the subject, Bob replaced me as Chairman of the Society's Stamp Committee.

Just after that convention, Bob and I delivered copies of Ralph's book for the Committee's members at their offices in Washington. We wanted them to have the copies for reference at their June 1980 regular meeting, at which time our proposal would be again considered. We were disappointed to learn later that summer that the Alger Stamp proposal had been

passed over again by the Committee. We immediately re-submitted it again and continued to pursue and expand our promotion campaign.

At the 1980 H.A.S. convention, our promotion efforts were discussed. Members agreed that we should pull out all stops to inform anyone and everyone who would listen about the need and merit of getting a stamp for Horatio





Alger. Ralph Gardner, Carl, Hartmann Jack Bales, Helen Gray, Bob Williman, Jerry Friedland, Dick Seddon, Ken Butler, Max Goldberg, Gil Westgard (those names that come readily to mind now) and all of us pulled every string we could to promote the effort. Bob got several articles placed in *Linn's Stamp News*, the highly respected paper among stamp people. He and I visited the Stamp Advisory Committee's office a couple more times, and Bob became a regular visitor and phone-caller there.

All of us wrote our elected representatives and made personal contacts with them when possible. Time was ticking away and we only had a few more months before the Alger commemorative stamp eligibility time would run out, according to the Committee's standard rules of acceptance.

It was at that time that I understand Helen Gray magically and successfully pushed the right button. I was not privy to specifically what happened, but I do know that the Horatio Alger Awards Committee had given Ronald Reagan an award in 1969 recognizing his rise to prominence and success as an actor and emerging political figure. It is well known that Mr. Reagan had made statements during his life that he had read and liked Horatio Alger books as a child. Now, timing is always important in evolving events such as our stamp promotion efforts. So let us jump ahead to 1981 and remember that Mr. Reagan took office as President of the United States on January 20, 1981. This was right in the midst of our extensive promotional campaign. *Editor's note: President-elect Reagan's response to one of Helen Gray's letters is reproduced on Page 8.*

Ralph spoke about this to me several years later and said he felt a key reason for us getting the stamp was gaining the support of President Reagan at the right time. All our other efforts mattered considerably, make no mistake about that. Essentially, the timing was just right and everything was in order and the stage was apparently set for President Reagan's nod. The bottom line was that on Sept. 16, 1981 the Postmaster General announced that 17 commemorative stamps would be issued in 1982, one of which memorialized Horatio Alger, Jr.

As President of the Horatio Alger Society at that time, I was contacted by the Stamp Advisory Committee staff and asked to choose the time and place where the stamp could have its First Day of Issue ceremony. Over the next week, with a flurry of phone calls to many H.A.S. members, including principally Bob, Carl, Jerry, Ralph and newly involved H.A.S. member Bill Russell, it was decided to suggest the ceremony take place at our annual convention the following May. Bill agreed to be the host in Willow Grove, Pa., and Bob agreed to work with the Postmaster General's staff and the local Postmaster in making the local arrangements for the First Day of



**A 22k gold foil Horatio Alger stamp replica is included with this first-day cover. Sixteen additional Alger first-day covers can be seen on Pages 10-11.**

Issue logistics. These arrangements were acceptable to the Postmaster General's staff, and Ralph, Helen and Bob met with them at Bob's house and developed the specifics of the actual ceremony that took place on April 30, 1982, at the Washington Motor Lodge Convention Center in Willow Grove, Pa. Hundreds of First Day of Issue vendors and stamp collectors from the area attended the ceremony, as did the local and national press, to cover remarks made by Postmaster General William F. Bolger, as well as Ralph Gardner, Helen Gray and others from the H.A.S. and the Horatio Alger Awards Committee.

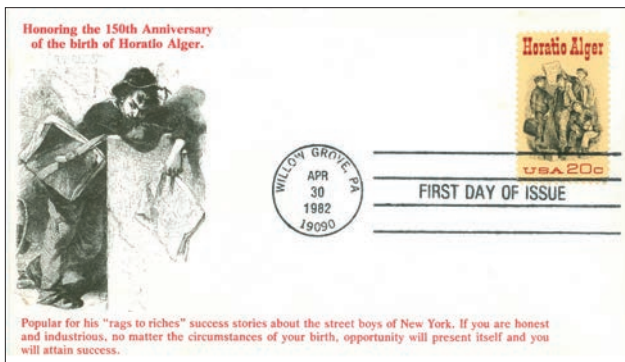
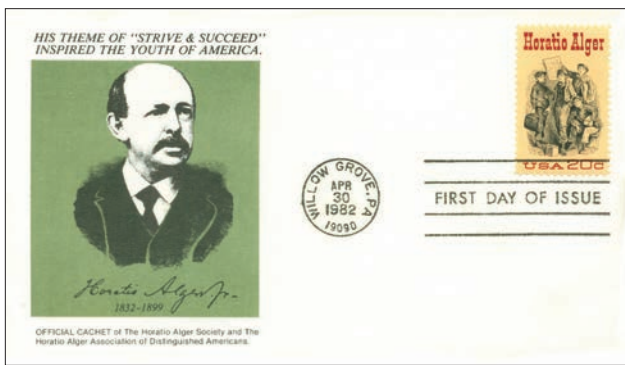
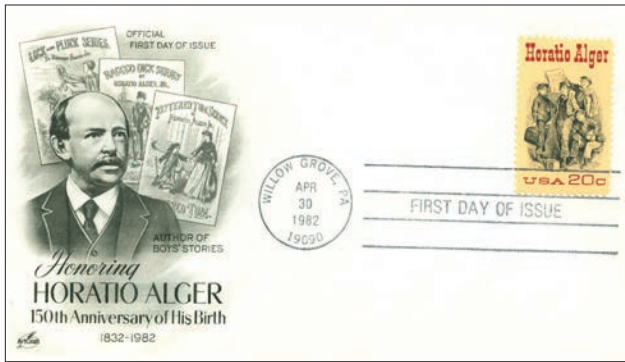
It was indeed a grand affair and a proud moment for us all, particularly Ken Butler, who had co-founded our Society almost two decades earlier. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to end this memory of the H.A.S. quest for getting a commemorative stamp by quoting the four-paragraph letter written by Ken to our *Newsboy* editor, Jack Bales, that was printed in the December, 1981 issue of *Newsboy* (Volume XX, Number 5, December 1981, Page 7) after the decision to issue the stamp was made public. I think this letter speaks for itself and pretty much sums up what we all felt at the time.

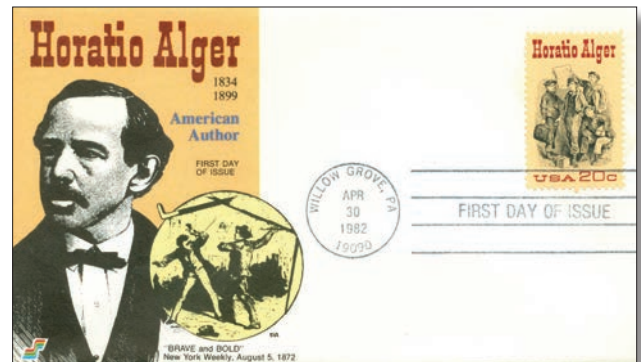
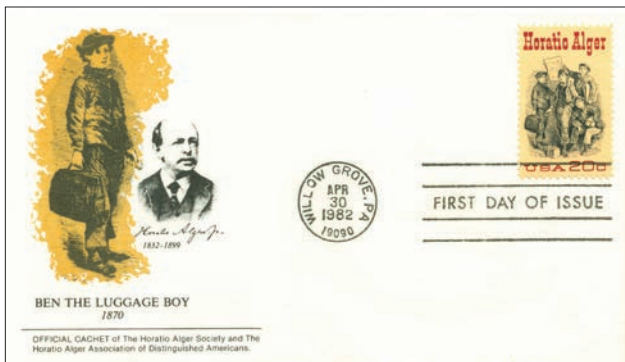
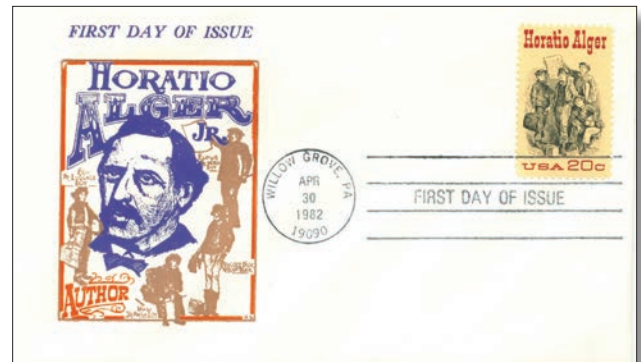
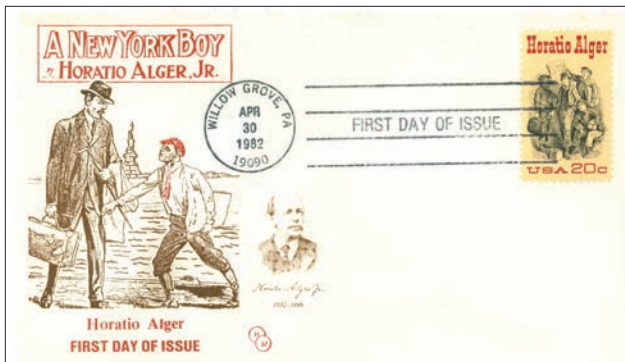
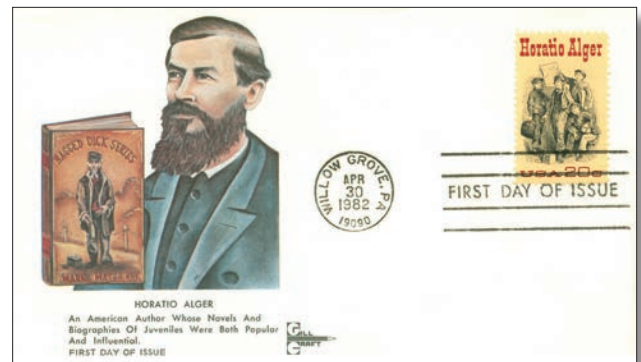
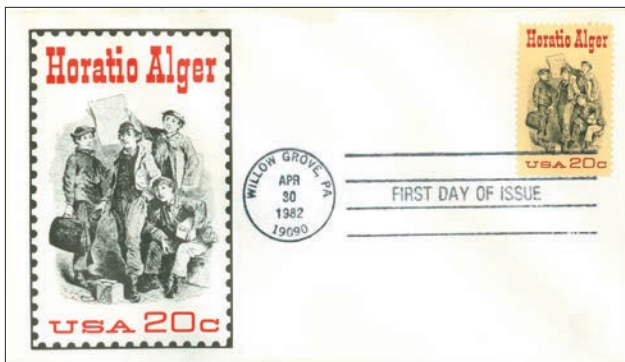
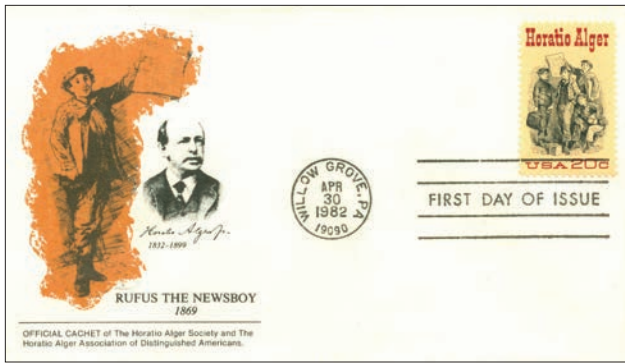
The letter was titled *Some Reflections on the Alger Stamp; three observations:*

"The hard work and ingenuity that has led to the achievement of the Horatio Alger commemorative stamp is one of the peak achievements of our Society in its 20 years of operation. It gives our favorite author, and our Society dedicated to him, the modern age status in America — and indeed in the world — so long deserved.

"Horatio Alger, Jr. has become a part of history, now officially recognized. What is hallowed ground to us in H.A.S. is now opening up to the world. He is now for everybody, not just for those remaining who read him as youths, or for book collectors. He will now be a

*(Continued on Page 20)*





# Another look back at 'Dash to DeKalb III'



**Rusty Black and Debby Jones during Saturday's lunch in the NIU Rare Books and Special Collections hospitality suite.**

Photo by Barry Schoenborn



**Ed Mattson checks edition points with outgoing H.A.S. president Bob Sipes during the annual book sale.**

Photo by Bill Gowen



**Lee Allen is joined by Sofia and Wendy Sipes during Friday's innner at the Hillside Restaurant in downtown DeKalb.**

Photo by Barry Schoenborn





**Bob Sipes and speaker Nathaniel Williams from the University of Kansas discuss Williams' talk on 19th century dime novel writer and editor Luis Senarens.**

Photo by Bill Gowen



**Carol Nackenoff and Bob Huber during Friday night's dinner.**

Photo by Bill Gowen



**Bill Gowen discusses the career of author, explorer and naturalist A. Hyatt Verrill.**

Photo by Barry Schoenborn



**Prospective buyers hear Ed Mattson ask for bids during the annual H.A.S. auction.**

Photo by Bill Gowen

# Robert Sidney Bowen's *Dave Dawson* World War II aviation series

By David K. Vaughan (PF-831)

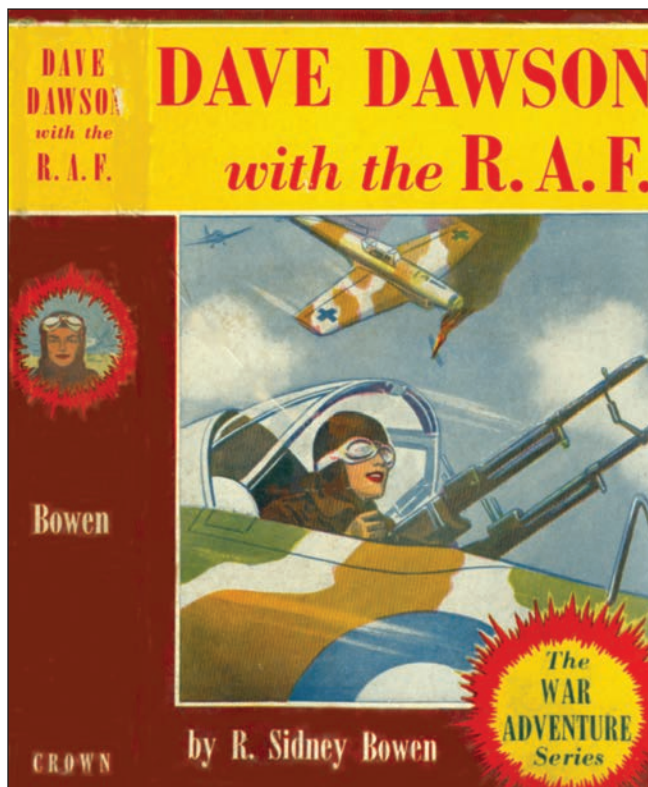
Throughout World War II, younger readers were the focus of a number of books featuring men and women in uniform; these books were designed to educate the reader about the operational aspects and career possibilities of the military services. And the attitudes of those young men (and women) who participated in the war in its later years certainly had their attitudes towards the war impacted and molded by a number of media forces, not least of which were the many books aimed at boys (and girls) that were published throughout the war.

Because the airplane was the glamor weapon of World War II technology, it is not surprising that many series books with a military background focused on pilots flying the latest aircraft. There were at least seven series devoted to youthful military pilots, including the **Yankee Flier Series** (1941-1946; nine books total) by Al Avery (actually Rutherford Montgomery); the **Lucky Terrell Series** (1942-1946; eight books total), by Canfield Cook; the **Steve Knight Series** (published 1941-2; three titles in all) by Ted Copp; and the **Don Winslow Series** (1940-1; five titles in all) by Don Martinek.

In addition to his **Yankee Flier Series**, Rutherford Montgomery wrote nine titles featuring younger soldiers and airmen in a variety of military services, mostly air corps. But the most productive writer of the World War II period was Robert Sidney Bowen, who produced two series about young aviators: the **Red Randall Series** (1944-1946; eight titles) and the **Dave Dawson Series** (1941-1946; fifteen titles).

In the **Dave Dawson Series**, Bowen describes the war to his younger readers and directly or indirectly influences their attitudes towards the war. Not surprisingly, Bowen adopted a basic "good guy/bad guy" approach to his subject, portraying the Germans and Japanese military characters as evil, inhuman, cruel caricatures with bestial characteristics and qualities (especially in the case of the Japanese).

Robert Sidney Bowen was well qualified to write aviation series books: he was a professional writer, and he had been a youthful pilot during World War I. He was born in Allston, Massachusetts in 1900 and



attended Newton (Massachusetts) High School; both of these locations are in the greater Boston metropolitan area. He enlisted with the Royal Flying Corps in October 1917, received his ground school at Toronto University and flight training in Canada and Texas (when the cold winter weather forced the trainees south to better flying weather). He claimed to have received flight instruction in Texas from Vernon Castle, the famous dancer and British pilot, who was killed in a training accident in Texas in February 1918.

Bowen continued his training in England and joined the Royal Air Force's 84 Squadron on the French front shortly before the Armistice was signed. Apparently he was able to fly a few combat missions in the days before the Armistice ended the war, and he claimed to have shot down two enemy aircraft, though they were unconfirmed. He is included among the pilots listed in *New England Aviators*, a two-volume compendium of American aviators from the New England area who had flown with American or other allied units. His picture shows him to be a youthful, clear-eyed individual with the requisite wings (Royal Air Force)

*This article was presented as a paper at the 48th annual conference of the Popular Culture Association on April 13, 2012 at Boston, Mass.*

and swagger stick. His service hat, however, seems to be a little large. Although his actual combat experience was limited, he made the most of it in his subsequent writing career.

After the war, he worked as a journalist for papers in London and Paris and eventually returned to Boston, where he worked for two Boston newspapers and lived for most of the remainder of his life. In the early 1930s, he became the editor of *Aviation* magazine, one of the mainstream American publications devoted to the latest developments in flying. He also began to contribute stories to the pulp magazines, eventually starting his own short-lived pulp magazine, **Dusty Ayers and His Battle Birds**, which ran from 1934 to 1935.

Bowen's experience as a pulp writer was especially useful when he was asked by Crown Publishers to begin a series for younger readers in which the events of the war served as a backdrop for the activities of the young flying hero of the series, American-born Dave Dawson, and his English companion, Freddy Farmer.

Although there is little doubt the main goal of Bowen and his publishers was to capitalize on world events to sell books (and, judging by the numbers of copies of the books available in bookstores, actual or online, they were quite successful in this effort), it seems evident that Bowen had a number of purposes in mind in creating his series. In addition to providing exciting narratives featuring his eager young protagonists, he intended to educate his readers about recent battles and activities in the war (in a general sense), to introduce and explain modern forms of military technology (mostly airplanes, of course, but other weapons where relevant), and to mold reader attitudes towards the war and especially towards the enemies of the Allied forces, the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese.

Given Bowen's World War I experiences, we should not be surprised to learn that Bowen supported England's efforts to wage war against the Nazis. While some in America were strongly isolationist (at least until the attack on Pearl Harbor), Bowen's outlook is clearly pro-British. In a way, it had to be, given the point



**Robert Sidney Bowen**  
(1900-1977)

of the series, which was to show how Dave Dawson, a talented American aviator, could enthusiastically support the British war effort. Bowen was not shy about developing the idea in the minds of younger readers (if not their parents as well) that helping England in its time of crisis was not merely a good idea; it was the only choice available if the world was to be cleansed of the evil influence of Nazism.

Bowen wrote the first five of the 15 titles in the series, one-third of the total, in 1941, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, before the United States entered the war. As a result, the focus of the action in those books is exclusively on the European theater and involves actions of the British army, air force, and navy.

The first title, *Dave Dawson at Dunkirk*, indicates its central event, the withdrawal of British troops from the beaches at Dunkirk after the German invasion of France. Dave Dawson (with his father, who does not appear in the story until its final pages) arrives in Paris just before the German invasion; when the German army invades, a French officer attempts to drive them to the coast of France where they hope to board a boat that will take them to England and safety, but the German army moves too quickly.

In their efforts to maneuver through the fleeing French people, Dave is separated from his French escort, meets Freddy Farmer (who is trying to drive a new ambulance to the front lines), and both are captured by the Germans. They escape by flying a small German aircraft, carrying valuable information about German plans, and reach the Dunkirk area in time to join the remnants of the British army, who are wading into the sea to be rescued by British small boats which have crossed the channel from England to help rescue the soldiers. (Dave Dawson and Freddy Farmer have both received flying lessons and have passed the solo stage in their training.) This is one of the better stories in the series, as it captures reasonably well the sense of surprise and distress that the citizens of France must have felt during the German invasion in May of 1940.

The second title, *Dave Dawson with the R.A.F.*, takes place four months later; Dawson, now a fully trained pilot in the Royal Air Force, is (along with Freddy Farmer) helping to defend England from attack by the German Air Force, flying Spitfire aircraft against the slower German bombers. The plot in this story, as is the case with the plots in almost all the stories, involves a special mission that takes Dave Dawson and Freddy Farmer away from normal operational missions and into covert activities, in which they hope to discover a secret weapon the Germans are hiding on the coast of France. In the process, they are captured by the Germans,

*(Continued on Page 16)*

# Robert Sidney Bowen's *Dave Dawson* aviation series

(Continued from Page 15)

interrogated, learn the secrets they were sent to discover, escape in a German aircraft, and fly to England.

In *Dave Dawson in Libya*, the third 1941 title, Dave Dawson and Freddy Farmer are now flying the British Blackburn Skua aircraft with the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy on the aircraft carrier *Victory* in the Mediterranean. After defeating a German attack while on patrol, the boys return to the carrier and volunteer to fly a mission into the Libyan desert in an effort to discover the German army's plan of attack. This is one of the few episodes in which the activities of Dave and Freddy are linked to major events in the war. In this case, their actions occur during British General Wavell's successful attack vs. the Italians ("Operation Compass," which ran from December 1940 to February 1941).

When the Italian army was defeated, the Germans immediately moved into North Africa and pushed the British army back. The book, however, describes only the Italian defeat; it does not describe the German reaction. It is the only book in the series to include a map, which shows the Libyan coastline and North African towns, indicating Bowen's desire to link the action of the book to the action of the war. For this reason alone, it stands out as one of the better books in the series.

The first three titles were published as a group, becoming the "breeder" package, intended to establish reader interest in — and increasing demand for — more books in the series; these books were certainly successful in creating that demand. The remaining two 1941 titles, *Dave Dawson on Convoy Patrol* and *Dave Dawson, Flight Lieutenant*, are part of a continuing pattern of illustrating the efforts of the British forces to wage war successfully. In *Convoy Patrol*, Dave Dawson and Freddy Farmer are flying with the Coastal Patrol, a new venue of operational activity not seen before in the series. Although the plot is less realistic and more contrived than in previous stories, Bowen gives some idea of what it would be like to fly patrol aircraft for long periods of time over the ocean, often in bad weather, with nothing but the sun and stars and blind reckoning to aid the aviators in finding their way to a target and then returning to their English coastal bases. While the Coastal Patrol aircraft were involved in searching for German submarines in all years of the war, the issue was of greatest concern in 1941.

The fifth title, *Dave Dawson Flight Lieutenant*, finds Dave and Freddy once more in the R.A.F., where they

again undertake a covert mission to identify a secret weapon the Germans are developing on the French coast (as they did in *Dave Dawson with the R.A.F.*). That the story occurs in 1941 is made evident in many passing references to actual 1941 events: the German attack on Yugoslavia (April 1941); Rudolph Hess' flight to England (10 May 1941); and the German invasion of Russia (June 1941). Thus, indirectly at least, Bowen is linking the events of the story to the timeline of the war.

By producing five titles with 1941 publication dates, presumably written within a one-year time frame, Bowen clearly demonstrates that he could be a determined and prolific writer. He is reported to have said that he could average 10,000 words per day, and could complete a novel in ten days. He also never revised his work, believing that any tampering with the story would ruin it.

Even though the setting of Bowen's first 1942 title, *Dave Dawson in Singapore*, continues to emphasize the British situation, the nature of the series changes as the Japanese quickly become an even more despised foe than the Germans had been in the first five titles. The story centers on the efforts of Dave and Freddy to discover who has been sending intelligence of British military activities in Singapore to the Japanese forces. Dave and Freddy visit Singapore long enough to locate a probable spy in the waterfront area of the city and then spend the rest of the story flying in a northwest direction, eventually reaching Burma, in an effort to uncover the route and contacts of the agents.

At the end of the story Dave and Freddy arrive in the area of the Flying Tigers, where they learn of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Bowen, like most observers of the war scene, must have been surprised and disheartened by the news that Singapore, an important British base in the Far East, quickly fell to the Japanese just two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, on 15 February 1942 (and, apparently, after the book was written and in press).

The second 1942 title, *Dave Dawson with the Pacific Fleet*, pays less attention to the struggles of the British forces and focuses almost exclusively on the activities of American military forces. With America in the war, Bowen rightly assumed that American readers would be much more interested in American, rather than British, military action. In *Dave Dawson with the Pacific Fleet*, Dave and Freddy are introduced to Colonel Wilson, the Head of United States Military Intelligence; he has heard of their exploits assisting the British military forces and, in the next six titles, enlists their aid in a series of special operations designed to gather information about enemy forces or thwart their plans to inflict harm on U. S. forces.

There are two central episodes in *Dave Dawson with*



*the Pacific Fleet*; the main and climactic event involves their efforts to thwart enemy agents in the U. S. Navy on board an aircraft carrier in the Pacific near the Marshall Islands (at this phase of the war, the Marshall Islands, located southwest of the Hawaiian Islands, represented the edge of Japanese territories in the Pacific; later, in 1943-44, the U. S. waged a military campaign there). In this title, both Dave and Freddy are assigned the rank of Lieutenants in the U.S. Navy, and they fly Douglas Devastator aircraft from aircraft carriers with no difficulty. Prior to their duties in the Pacific, however, they fly across the United States from Washington to the West Coast to join their naval unit. Enemy agents force their aircraft down in the desert area west of Albuquerque; they are temporarily captured but manage to escape and continue their original mission.

In addition to providing an American setting for some of the story's action, it seems clear that Bowen wanted to bring in the subject of espionage activities within the U.S., a subject (and more importantly, a plot device) to which Bowen returns in later titles.

In *Dave Dawson in the Air Corps* (the third 1942 title), Dave and Freddy are now captains in the army air forces; Colonel Welsh instructs Dave and Freddy to fly to the Canal Zone and investigate reports of espionage; during one of their flights in the area, they discover a secret German base, escape, and attack and destroy the base. The concern about the vulnerability of the Canal Zone as an area of potential attack by the Germans was common in the United States before the attack on Pearl Harbor and suggests that Bowen may have drafted this story before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After two titles with an almost exclusively American focus, Bowen returns to the European theater in his fourth 1942 title, *Dave Dawson with the Commandos*. As the story opens, Dave and Freddy have received commando training and are directed by Colonel Welsh to return to England, where they are to participate in a raid into French territory similar to the Dieppe raid which, as one character in the story reports, occurred a "short time ago." The British raid on Dieppe took place on 19 August 1942, and was considered one of

the worst tactical defeats the Allies suffered in Europe; it was conceived by Field Marshal Montgomery, who ordered the raid without complete coordination at the higher levels of Allied military command. Thousands of Canadian soldiers became casualties.

However, Bowen puts a positive spin on the episode, saying that it "scared Hitler silly." Dave and Freddy are given the assignment of bailing out over France, meeting a British agent disguised as a German, capturing two German generals, and bringing them back to England in a German aircraft. They do so successfully but engage in an appalling amount of carnage, using their commando training in several man-to-man combat encounters.

The first 1943 title, *Dave Dawson on the Russian Front*, appears to be Bowen's attempt to give recognition to the military efforts of another Allied power, as Dave and Freddy are sent to Russia by Colonel Welsh as a diversionary ploy to allow a meeting between important British and Russian agents near the German-Russian border. Although the Battle of Stalingrad is never specifically mentioned, it is likely that the Russian resistance at Stalingrad (which extended over a period of several months, from August 1942 to February 1943) may have prompted Bowen to produce this title. Dave and Freddy quickly visit the Kremlin and Red Square,

but even the introduction of a female Russian intelligence officer (the only woman character to appear in any of the fifteen titles) does not elevate the quality of the story.

In the second 1943 title, *Dave Dawson with the Flying Tigers*, Dave and Freddy do not reach the Flying Tigers until late in the story, which is mostly concerned with their efforts to travel from England to the United States (while flying a Lockheed Hudson bomber, they are shot down by a Nazi submarine, made prisoners, and escape), and then from the United States to China. They fly a B-25 across the Pacific on their secret mission to China, not only taking off from naval aircraft carriers (as the Doolittle Raiders had done in April 1942) but also landing on naval aircraft carriers (as the Doolittle Raiders had NOT done).

There is a reference in the story to "MacArthur's

(Continued on Page 18)



# Robert Sidney Bowen's *Dave Dawson* aviation series

(Continued from Page 17)

boys" on Bataan and Corregidor; the Bataan Death March had taken place in April 1942 and was probably old news at this point; the episode is introduced into the story to remind the readers of the fate of American servicemen in the hands of the Japanese soldiers, who are increasingly vilified as the story progresses.

The final 1943 title, *Dave Dawson at Guadalcanal*, is one of the better titles in the series, as Dave and Freddy join a group of other pilots to fly off aircraft carriers in support of the upcoming invasion of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The campaign in the Solomon Islands extended from August 1942 to February 1943 and was the first major offensive by Allied forces against the Empire of Japan. The book provides a good description of U.S. naval operations at sea, including launching aircraft from aircraft carriers, in some of the more factually descriptive writing to be found in the series. Dave and Freddy fly Douglas Dauntless attack bombers, are shot down, spend a day in a life raft, are picked up by a German (not Japanese) U-boat, and are transferred to a Japanese aircraft carrier, where they are allowed to escape, so that Japanese aircraft can follow their course to the United States naval fleet. But Dave and Freddy land at a shore installation instead and bring intelligence of Japanese military activities to the American authorities.

The first 1944 title, *Dave Dawson at Casablanca*, returns the action to the United States, as Dave and Freddy fly from the U.S. to Africa using the southern transatlantic route, from Brazil to Casablanca. The title suggests that there will be some description of the first allied landing on the coast of Africa, which occurred at Casablanca, Morocco, in October of 1942, but in fact the reference is to the Casablanca Conference, which was attended by President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in January 1943. Dave and Freddy are part of a decoy mission to distract attention from the real route of flight taken by President Roosevelt. Enemy agents attempt to intercept or delay them along their route of flight from Miami to Puerto Rico, to San Fernando (British Trinidad), Paramaribo (Dutch Guiana), and Belem and Natal (Brazil). They eventually cross the Atlantic to North Africa, and discover a secret German military base where German aircraft and ground forces are being flown in an attempt to intercept the President. In this story Bowen incorporates the standard route of flight used by American aircrews to fly across the

southern Atlantic to the Mediterranean and European theaters as part of the plot.

The second and last 1944 title, *Dave Dawson with the Eighth Air Force*, once again finds Dave and Freddy flying over Europe in an effort to gain intelligence about a new German secret weapon. Although the title suggests that Dave and Freddy will be flying B-17 bomber missions, they are flying P-38s as escorts (actually, P-38s were hardly ever used for that purpose in Europe), and even then they do not fly much in the story, as most of their efforts involve searching for information on the ground. Before they become involved in their intelligence mission, Dave and Freddy survey the effects of the German bombing raids after the Luftwaffe had given up its attempt to "force London to its knees" (31).

Just as the Japanese had been the subject of Bowen's scathing contempt in Guadalcanal, the Germans are the targets of Bowen's scorn in this story; he refers to them as "baby killers" and even Hitler is singled out for scorn, when he is referred to as "Adolph (slaughter the women and children, too) Hitler" (52). They bail out of their aircraft as they escort a night bombing mission, flown by both British and American bombers (which never in fact happened historically; the British bombers flew night missions, and the American Eighth Air Force bombers flew day missions).

Dave and Freddy eventually rendezvous, are captured, escape, and fly back to England in a German aircraft, but not before dropping bombs on a secret German base, so that it becomes a "boiling volcano of white death" (250). We are told that their efforts are essential to the Allied cause, as they are involved "cold-blooded war" with "civilization itself hanging in the balance" (240).

*Dave Dawson at Truk*, the last and rarest title in the series, was published in 1946, after a two-year interval in publication of series titles. Probably written in 1944, it describes the efforts of Dave and Freddy to assist U.S. naval authorities in locating a German agent who is a naval aviator on a carrier in the Pacific (a plot device Bowen had used in *Pacific Fleet*). Having caught a glimpse of the individual earlier, they intend to examine the carrier's aviators after they arrive in Oahu, Hawaii, but they are abducted as they tour the island, and locked in a warehouse. They escape, rejoin their carrier, and recognize the agent as he takes off on a mission; they follow him and are able to intercept him before he reaches Truk Island, where the battle for Truk (which was fought in February of 1944) occurs.

*Dave Dawson at Truk* includes the largest number of cultural attacks of all the series titles; never one to shy away from attacking the racial inferiorities of the Japanese or Germans, Bowen is relentless in his assault on what he perceives as the racial inferiority of the

Japanese. In all of the titles in the series, Bowen never says "Japanese"; it is always "Jap." And it is rarely "Jap" without a noun following, usually "Jap rat." In *Truk* the phrase appears as one word: "japrat," the J no longer capitalized. In this book, the word/phrase appears eleven times, three times on one page.

Bowen had apparently written one more title, *Dave Dawson Over Berlin*, a sample page of which was previewed on the last page of *Truk*; this had been the standard practice in all the titles. However, *Over Berlin* was never published, perhaps because the publishers decided the subject matter would no longer be appealing, as the war had ended and the readers (even younger readers) were now presumably more interested in the peacetime application of aviation. Perhaps by 1946, the publishers also realized that racial slurs and epithets, even against the maleficent enemies of World War II, were no longer appropriate.

In reviewing the publication dates of the titles in the **Dave Dawson Series**, we can see that Bowen was wonderfully productive early, issuing five titles in 1941 and four in 1942, then completing only three titles in 1943 and two in 1944. We might wonder why Bowen's productivity decreased when he was writing such a popular series. The answer is simple; by late 1943 he was writing a new series, the **Red Randall Series**, whose two main characters, Red Randall and Jimmy Joyce, were strikingly similar to Dave Dawson and Freddy Farmer. The main difference is that both Red and Jimmy are Americans who meet during the attack on Pearl Harbor (in the first title of the series, Red Randall at Pearl Harbor), and who share the adventures in seven subsequent titles. Bowen wrote five Red Randall titles in 1944 (he probably started in 1943; the first five titles have publication (copyright) dates of 1944. So Bowen was in fact amazingly productive in 1944, when he produced a total of seven titles in both the Dave Dawson and Red Randall series. Then followed two Red Randall titles in 1945 and one in 1946.

Bowen's strengths as a writer include his knowledge of aircraft characteristics and capabilities and his general understanding of how a variety of military forces might operate in a particular theater of war. He describes many aircraft flown by aviators on all sides: specific German, Japanese, American, and even Italian aircraft are mentioned in every title, although many of these aircraft were actually out of date early in the war. And even when he appears to be ignorant of the actual practices of the U. S. military employment of aircraft (as in having P-38s escort B-17 bombers, or in having U. S. and English bombers participate in a joint raid), he may have been intentionally provided false information for readers sympathetic to the Axis cause.

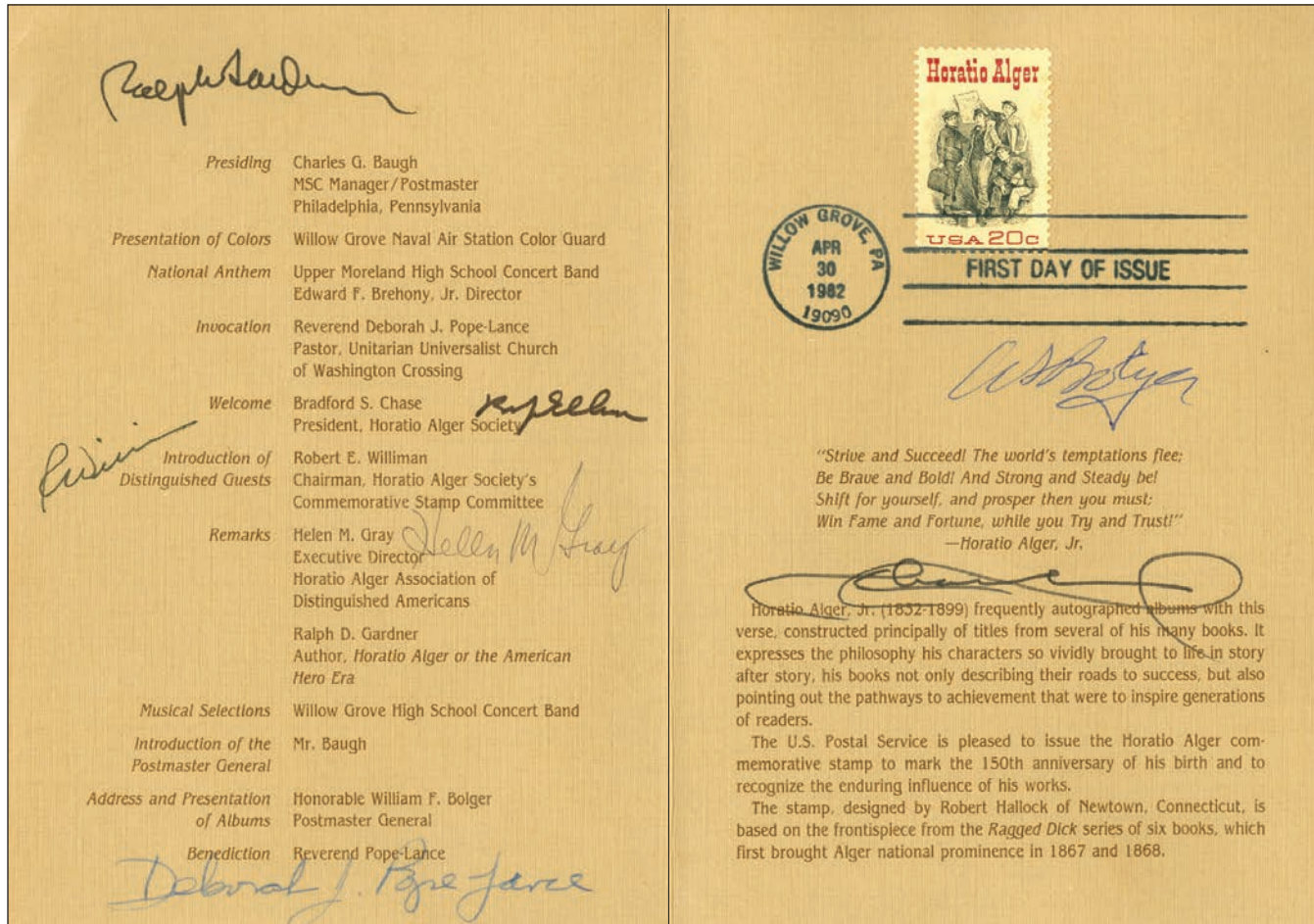


**By late 1943, Bowen was writing another series about World War II aerial combat, the *Red Randall Series*, eight titles issued by G&D between 1944 and 1946.**

Given the fact that he was committed to writing about two young pilots as heroes, he was restricted, to a certain extent, to bring only two-place aircraft into his plots. Even the youngest of readers would probably have known that large aircraft required more aircrew members than two (the B-17 and B-24, for instance, typically flew with 10-man crews). And if Freddy Farmer found himself frequently relegated to the back seat or co-pilot position in the aircraft they flew, he never seemed to complain, and in fact his keen eyesight and superior marksmanship often saved their lives.

The Dave Dawson series concludes with the end of the war a year and a half away, and most of the important allied victories yet to be fought. Yet it doubtless accomplished its initial aims, of educating its readers about (at least some) aspects of the war, informing them of the role of modern military technology (especially aircraft), and it certainly tried to mold its younger readers' attitudes towards the enemies they faced, especially in the early years of the war, when the eventual allied victory was not at all certain.

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The official program for the First Day of Issue ceremony for the Horatio Alger commemorative stamp. Among those signing this copy were Alger bibliographer Ralph D. Gardner, H.A.S. President Brad Chase, Horatio Alger Association Executive Director Helen M. Gray, and U.S. Postmaster General William F. Bolger.

# 30 years later

## Reflections on the Horatio Alger commemorative postage stamp

(Continued from Page 9)

figure of mass awareness. Directly and indirectly it will give our Society its biggest boost ever.

"Our deep thanks must go to all those members who persisted, despite disappointments. Those members strived ... and they *succeeded*. We will gain members more rapidly, we will hold our members longer. We did not despair. We fought the good fight. Horatio Alger will live on because of his stories, and be opened up to new-generation masses. Our dream is now the American Dream. Let us use this new luster to invigorate our programs. To me, as one of the two founders, I feel an exultation beyond words."

— Kenneth B. Butler, co-founder, Horatio Alger Society



A highly collectible variant of the 1982 Horatio Alger stamp is this unusual perforation error.