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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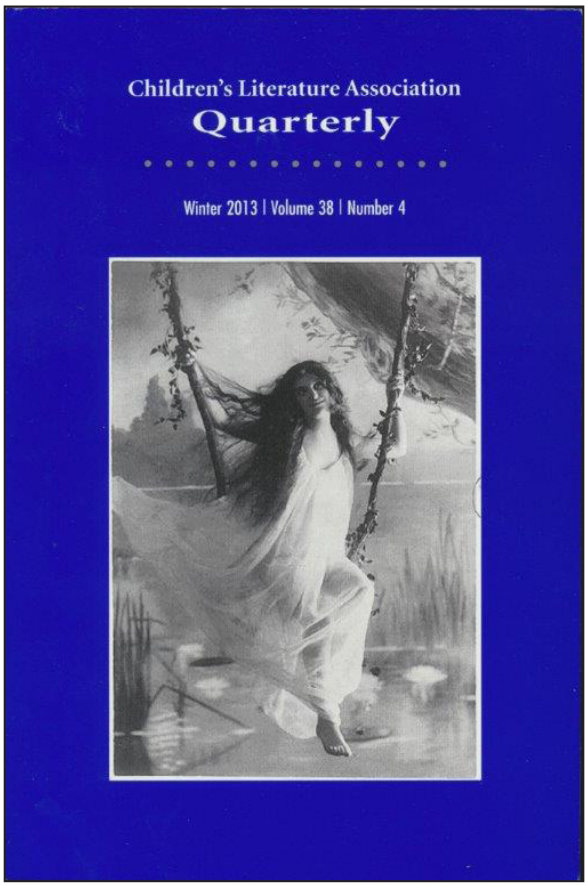

Banish the Books: Horatio Alger, Jr., the Censors, the Libraries and the Readers, 1870-1910

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William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.:

Some cautionary evidence of their working relationship — Part 2

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President's column

While I am not a serious Alger collector myself, I have often marveled at the depths of scholarship that are on regular display by members of our society in **Newsboy,** at conventions, and in other contexts. One example I have been mulling over recently is first editions, where the tiniest of variations have been studied so that the very "firstest" first edition of each title can be identified and then collected. The difference between a first state, first printing and a second state, first printing can be negligible, but the different in cost is generally dramatic.

This lust for the very first edition seems to be as old as book collecting. It was certainly indulged in by the great collectors of English and American literature, such as Henry E. Huntington and Josiah K. Lilly, Jr. I share it of course, always happiest when I am adding a first edition boy's book to my shelves, preferably with a nice dust jacket. However, I have begun to have somewhat heretical thoughts. Sometimes we spend the most for very obscure series that never caught on, may only have gone through one printing, and are thus hard to find (and sometimes equally difficult to read). For the student of American popular culture, it is at least as interesting to try to collect the *last* edition of a series. From that, one can learn how long it ran and thus how popular it actually was. I have two modest examples from my own collecting interests.

As we all know, the Appleton publishing house and its successor, Appleton-Century, gives the edition number on the last page of each book. Thus, if you find a "(1)" there, you know that you are looking at a first edition. For many titles, one rarely sees anything else, meaning that it may have only gone through one printing. But for Ralph Henry Barbour's first juvenile, *The Half-Back*, originally published in 1899, I own the *thirty-seventh* printing, issued in 1940. And I can state with confidence that this is the very last edition, because the inside cover has two different stamps, one reading "Reference Copy not to be taken from Library D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc." and the other reading "Out of Print File D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc. No. 9410." The spine of the dust jacket has a red dot that probably also indicates that it was an Appleton-Century file copy.

Now I am on the lookout, both for other Appleton titles I collect with high printing numbers and for other books from Appleton's reference library. Because they aren't first editions, the last editions are not as prized

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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 books, pulps and dime novels.

Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is $25 ($20 for seniors), with single issues of **Newsboy** $4.00. Please make remittance payable to the Horatio Alger Society.

Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to **Horatio Alger Society, 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176.**

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. You are invited to visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at **www.horatioalgersociety.net.**

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, 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176.

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**

Banish the Books: Horatio Alger, Jr., the Censors, the Libraries and the Readers, 1870-1910

By Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

Boys are nature's detectives of unreality.
— George L. Chaney (38)

This study explores a relationship between advocacy rhetoric and verifiable outcomes, especially the effectiveness of proposed strategies and solutions. Censorship behavior and the judgmental nature of book reviews are productive subjects for comparing rhetorical inputs with output variables as found in library holdings and transaction counts.

To test this methodological framework, I have selected the public library book-banning episode in the last quarter of the 19th century directed toward juvenile series authors, particularly Horatio Alger, Jr. (1832–1899. Highlights of the Alger narrative and the censorship campaign serve as preliminary context to the central thrust of this inquiry: application of a multivariate, evidence-based approach to ascertain the success or failure of the censor's agenda.

A survey of 47 public library book catalogs demonstrates that the censorship proponents achieved relatively little impact, and that Alger library holdings held remarkably stable during this period. A 10-year digital database of public library loan transactions in Muncie, Indiana — the first of its kind in the nation — reveals that Horatio Alger, Jr., was the most frequently borrowed author in the library, validating his sustained popularity more than a decade following the initial censorship attacks (*What Middletown Read*). These findings, when combined with rhetorical elements, considerably enrich our understanding of this attempt to control the reading menu of children.

Horatio Alger, Jr., Harvard graduate and Unitarian minister, is the best-selling 19th-century boys' series author. He wrote hundreds of books, short stories, and poems which highlighted "strive and succeed" and "fame and fortune" themes. His greatest success came early with the Ragged Dick series, a collection of stories about New York street boys who strive and eventually succeed. First published as a book in May 1868, *Ragged Dick* was an immediate success, delivering Alger from

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This article originally appeared in Children's Literature Association Quarterly, *Volume 38, Number 4, Winter 2013, pp. 420-434, published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, DOI: 10.1353/chq.2013.0058. It is reprinted with permission of the author and publisher.*

First glance at 'Fame and Fortune in Columbus'

The 2015 Horatio Alger Society convention, "Fame and Fortune in Columbus," will be hosted by Bob Huber (PF-841) and will be held on April 30-May 3, 2015 at the Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport Hotel in Columbus, Ohio.

Located 2½ miles west of the Port Columbus International Airport, and just off Interstates 670 and 270, the Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport Hotel has 150 guest rooms, heated indoor pool, exercise room, free Internet connection, and complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport.

The hotel rate is $125 plus tax multiple occupancy, and reservations should be made directly with the Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport Hotel, 2901 Airport Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43219. The direct line to the hotel desk is **1-614 475-8530**. Please identify yourselves as being with the Horatio Alger Society to get the discounted rate for the above dates, and make your reservation by Wednesday, April 1. After that, the group rate is not guaranteed.

The registration fee for the 2015 convention is $115. The official reservation form and schedule of events will be enclosed with the next **Newsboy** issue (January-February 2015). We are in the process of organizing what promises to be an excellent consignment and donation auction for

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Editor's notebook

Another year is nearly over, which means the holiday season is upon us. When you receive this issue, memories of your Thanksgiving dinner will be fresh in your minds, with the big shopping season now in full swing.

This issue includes host Bob Huber's initial "welcome" note for the 2015 convention, "Fame and Fortune in Columbus." Bob will have a full preview article, along with our official convention registration form and schedule of events enclosed with the next issue of **Newsboy**.

An annual tradition for the November-December **Newsboy** is our list of donors to the **Strive and Succeed Award** fund, which finances a scholarship bestowed upon a deserving high school senior during the annual H.A.S. convention each spring. Because of the last-minute donations still coming in, we have decided to publish the list of 2014 donors in the January-February issue. If your dues renewal envelope is enclosed with this issue, please consider adding a little extra for the S&S Award fund. If you have already paid your dues this year and desire to make a separate tax-deductible donation, mail a check by the end of December to Horatio Alger Society, 1400 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176.

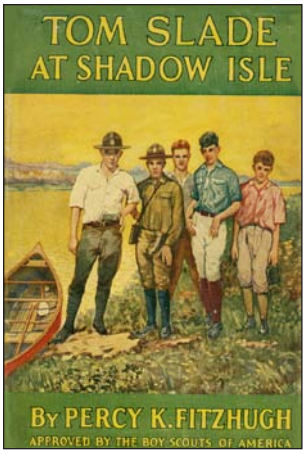
As you know by now, we have been in the process of posting PDF images of back issues of **Newsboy** to the official H.A.S. website, with the six 2012 issues (including replacement color photos in many instances) to be available online any day now. Bob Eastlack (PF-557), the inspiration and main contributor to this ongoing project, has an article on Page 6 describing his methods of scanning the older **Newsboy** issues, along with his creating a comprehensive index of **Newsboy** subjects. The latter is now available on our website as an Excel document. We are hopeful of making this index even more user-friendly, but decided to post it now for the benefit of our membership. Bob welcomes suggestions, additions and corrections by writing him at eastlackrd@yahoo.com.

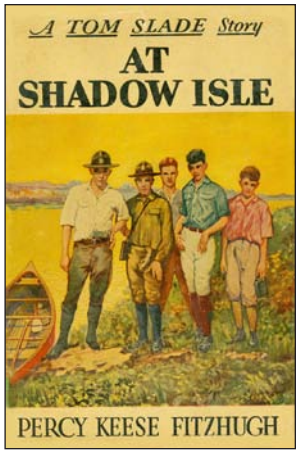
Happy holidays from the Horatio Alger Society!

MEMBERSHIP

New address

Bill Hoven (PF-1112)
3150 W. Calhoun Blvd., #403
Minneapolis, MN 55416





President's column

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and are thus less likely to be kept and made available to collectors. But they are also much less expensive!

Another interesting case of "last editions" comes in Percy Keese Fitzhugh's Tom Slade series. As we know from the bibliographies of Hudson and Mattson/Davis, in the final year or two before the whole series went out of print, Grosset & Dunlap evidently took about half the 19 titles off the market and began issuing the rest with a different dust jacket that reversed the style of the titles. For example, instead of the traditional *Tom Slade in the North Woods*, the title became *In the North Woods: A Tom Slade Story*. The retitled dust jackets (above) were also redesigned, altering the bands at the top and bottom from green to cream and adjusting their size.

The format and title pages of the books themselves did not change, and the final title in the series, *The Parachute Jumper,* adopted yet another style of dust jacket. Based on information on the back flap of the new-format jackets, it would seem that nine of the first 18 Tom Slade titles (numbers 1–2, 10–11, 13, and 15–18) were issued with the revised format. Along with several other Fitzhugh enthusiasts, I have been collecting these last editions, and we have been trying to determine whether all of these nine were in fact issued with the new jackets. So far, we have seen five of the nine (numbers 2, 10–11, 13, and 16–17), but the hunt continues. Please let me know if you have any of the others.

No doubt there are many other examples of ways in which hunting last editions can be as educational and enjoyable as focusing exclusively on first editions. Why not give it a try?

Your Partic'lar Friend,
Jeff Looney (PF-903)
1712 Concord Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Banish the Books:

(Continued from Page 3)

relative obscurity to literary prominence in the juvenile arena and beyond. Many of his tales focus on urban street youngsters such as musicians, newsboys, and tramps. Character, persistence, educational attainment, a helping hand, and a dollop of luck usually brought mid-level success, though not the unlimited "rags to riches" narrative incorrectly ascribed to Alger in the 20th century. Beginning in the 1870s, the works of Alger and other formulaic writers came under withering public attack for their unrealistic storylines, their self-reliant ethos which threatened the family and social order, and their poor literary quality. Librarians and others called for either the removal of these books from public and school libraries or a ban on future purchases.

Context and Gauntlet

Alger wrote his books surrounded by contested visions of the most appropriate form of literature for young readers. Most closely aligned with Alger's own background and education was the quality literature published in such magazines as **Youth's Companion** and **St. Nicholas.** These periodicals counted Louisa May Alcott, Rudyard Kipling, and Frances Hodgson Burnett as regular contributors. Joel Shrock captures the genteel values which these publications espoused:

> The high-quality children's magazines produced basically three plot formulas: the ordeal, change of heart, and gentry mission. Although children were cut off from their families in the stories and the younger heroes and heroines exhibited self-reliance and bravery, the independence of these young people was always within set limits. The moral structure of the stories was vitally important and any action or violence had to have some higher moral purpose. Spotless character, intellectual and moral refinement, self-control, and a dedication to public service were all essential ingredients in genteel children's literature. (166–67)

If genteel literature promoted social cohesion and upper-class respectability, the rise of new forms of popular literature, which emphasized action and fantasy, and sometimes detachment of the characters from the family unit, precipitated a struggle for supremacy in the juvenile fiction genre. The perception of the diminution of the family as a cohesive and stable unit is derived from the many plot lines that employed orphans and abandoned children. Other writers combined elements of both traditions, including William T. Adams (writing as "Oliver Optic"), William M. Thayer, and Samuel L. Clemens (writing as "Mark Twain").

Alger's early narratives emphasized self-improvement, individual effort, mild criticism of the industrial system, and later strong affirmation of the capitalist model that made possible the ascension of his characters to middle-class respectability. Overlaying these changes in literary direction was the transformation during the Gilded Age (roughly the period from 1865 to 1900) from rugged individualism to a more collective approach to social and economic issues. Alger could not have imagined that in mid-career he would become a major target of those who advocated purging certain types of literature from the marketplace and from the nation's public and school libraries. The fire bell of the censor was overtly directed at the perceived deficiencies of an author's text, but the subliminal rationales were often derived from broader cultural and historical currents, as Dee Garrison notes (*Cultural Custodians* 327–36).

These social issues and philosophical positions intersected with a new genre of working-class literature, the dime novel, which influenced the reaction to the growing number of series book authors, including Horatio Alger, Jr. Early dime novels emphasized frontier storylines and contained graphic illustrations. Characters and plot lines, while action-oriented, were moral in tone and did not elevate evil. By the 1880s, principally due to publisher competition, dime novels took on a more sensational cast and were increasingly viewed as lurid and without redeeming literary merit. The more sensational dime novels, as well as serialized story papers, came under increasing scrutiny as agents for the promotion of delinquency.[1] Distinctions between dime novels soon blurred, and some individuals painted the entire juvenile genre with a negative brush and then proceeded to broaden the brush strokes, conflating dime novels with series books.[2]

Librarians' Labyrinth

The nascent library profession, the establishment of the public library, the extended debate over the nature and quality of library collections, and the calls to exclude popular series authors converged and overlapped. A collective profile of American Library Association executive board members during the period 1876–1917 indicates that they tended to be white male Protestants whose families came from northwestern Europe, that their average age was 50, and that they frequently shunned politics. The majority of the cohort were chief executives of their respective libraries.[3] Many ALA leaders

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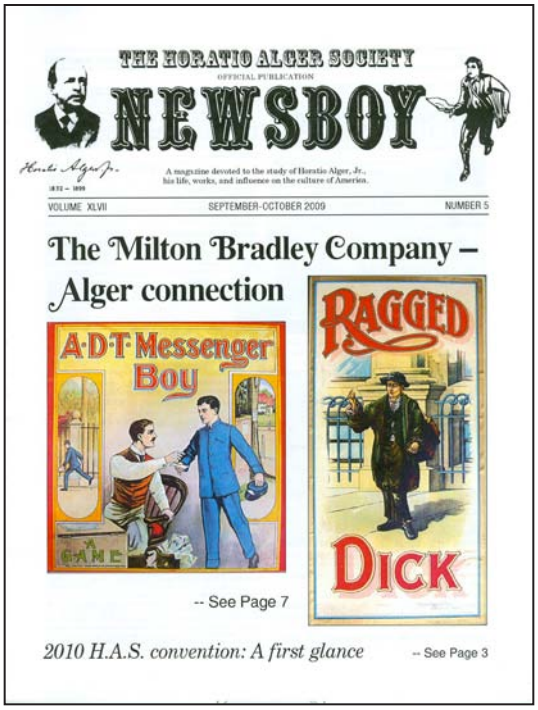
The **Newsboy** scanning and index projects

By Robert D. Eastlack (PF-557)

With time on my hands, I was looking for something to do. It couldn't be just anything. It had to be for the benefit of others or it would only be self-serving. I had been on my computer surfing the net for Algers when I returned to the Horatio Alger Society's website.

Making a mental note of the fact that past **Newsboys** were not yet available, I contacted our esteemed webmaster, Bob Huber, to ascertain what the delay was all about. He indicated his willingness to post scanned copies of back issues if and when someone provided them.


THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
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A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.
VOLUME XLVII SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2009 NUMBER 5
The Milton Bradley Company – Alger connection
A·D·T Messenger Boy
RAGGED DICK
-- See Page 7
2010 H.A.S. convention: A first glance
-- See Page 3

That was when I had my epiphany! I could scan all the back issues of **Newsboy** I had and send them to Bob. I had a scanner and I had issues dating back to 1978 (with a gap of missing copies that would fill the Grand Canyon). I let Bob know that I would work on it and he then shared with me the criteria for the scans (file size and format). He also indicated that Bill Gowen was busy producing the more current **Newsboys** for posting on-line and that there would always be a two-year hiatus between what was on-line and the current year. This was to affirm the validity of membership in the Horatio Alger Society.

In seeking out more more knowledgeable members, I got in touch with Brad Chase. He was willing to entrust me with the care and protection of a part of his **Newsboy** collection that dated 1962-1977. Thinking out loud, he said wouldn't it be nice if someone were to tackle an index of all of the **Newsboys**? We discussed the fact that I had a copy of Jack Bales' "The Horatio Alger Society Newsboy Index, July 1962 — June 1972" and that Deidre Johnson (PF-596) had some information posted on-line. I then exchanged some emails with her, gaining her permission to make use of her data. I also obtained permission from Bales to incorporate his material in my index. Thus, I committed myself to this monumental task!

My initial goal was to scan as many **Newsboys** as possible prior to the 2014 convention so that I could give those scans to Bob Huber on a flash drive while attending the convention (the large size of the files precluded emailing them to him).

And so I sat at my dining room table with my scanner and laptop plugged in and a pile of **Newsboys** before me. To scan a **Newsboy** was to scan each page separately and then produce a composite file, making sure that the pages were sequential. This process involved approximately one-half hour per **Newsboy** issue. I provided Bob Huber with scans from 1962-1991. Not wanting to duplicate efforts, I stopped at 1991 because Bill Gowen, who has faithfully served as **Newsboy** editor since mid-1991, was providing his handiwork after that time. To summarize:

1970-1979 — 81 scans
1980-1989 — 67 scans
1990-1999 — 12 scans

At one point during the process I contacted the NIU library for assistance. Thanks to their cooperation, 32 **Newsboys** from 1962-1969 were scanned and shared with Bob Huber and myself. It was through this exchange that I learned of dropbox.com, whereby a file could be made available for downloading, no matter what the size of the file. I have since used that method to share files with Bob Huber.

Work on an index was a horse of a different color, or maybe that was a mule. To a certain extent an index is a subjective matter. Placing a specific article into some type of defining category is subjective, some being more readily identifiable than others. Through the course of the past six months I have identified, then revised the categories I have used in my index. The final categories are:

01 – Alger's life
02 – Alger's name
03 – Alger's work
04 – Book review
05 – Collecting
06 – Commentary
07 – Contemporary work
08 – Convention
09 – HAS (Horatio Alger Society)

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Banish the Books:

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subscribed to the belief that a rational, informed electorate was essential to democracy. All were convinced that "good reading or, more appropriately, 'the best reading' would improve character, and promote good behavior, material progress and cultural uplift: bad reading would debilitate character, promote bad behavior, retard material progress, and stagnate if not reverse cultural progress" (Wiegand, *Politics* 230). This profile may be reasonably applied to the library directors and specialist librarians calling for restrictions on library collections.

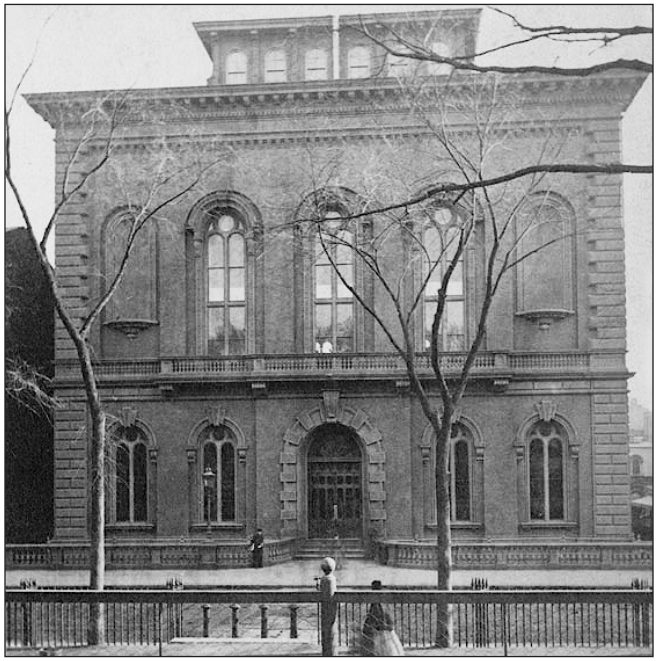
The 23rd annual report of the Boston Public Library, as commented upon in *The Literary World* in September 1875, exposes the trustees' [and librarians'] ambivalence toward democratizing fiction, their custodial impulses, and the patrons' preferences. The columnist inveighed against the library, whose collection was 75 percent fiction:

> This denunciation of popular reading-matter comes with singular effect from the Trustees of a Library which supplies this same matter so liberally to the public of Boston, — in the proportion of three volumes to one of solid and useful literature. They see the right, and yet the wrong pursue; they know and declare that the effect of this "ephemeral literature, exciting and fascinating," is very injurious; yet they take no effectual measures to curtail its supply. ("Public Libraries and Fiction" 48)

In a few years, the Boston Public Library would come under sustained criticism for its collection policies from one of its own staff, James Mascarene Hubbard, a Yale-educated rare book cataloger. In early 1881, Hubbard lamented the great increase in novels and stories for all ages which were represented in the library. He called for a thorough screening process to ensure that worthless and sensational fiction would not be purchased. Hubbard concluded that unless there were radical changes in the quantity and quality of fiction in the collections of the public library, it would be seen as a purveyor of socially evil literature (168–78).

Alger and the Exorcists

Beginning in the 1870s, Horatio Alger, Jr. — like his friend and mentor, William T. Adams — was cited for self-centered, unrealistic, and vapid juvenile fiction that was found wanting by many librarians, educators, and others. One of the earliest condemnations of Alger and other similar writers appeared in the 1874 annual report of the Silas Bronson Library in Waterbury, Connecticut. H.



Boston Public Library building (1858-95) on Boylston Street, its last home prior to the move to the current Copley Square location.

F. Bassett, librarian, while conceding that juvenile fiction attracted many youngsters to the library, expressed deep concern over the excessive number of sensational works which were read on a daily and weekly basis. Thoughtful reading, he claimed, was not possible with such a regimen. Consequences could include a "weakened memory and distaste for everything that taxes, even in a slight degree, the powers of thought, a confusion of ideas that in some cases is little removed from downright idiocy, and often to the reader's health" (Bassett 9–10).

There were a few protracted direct attacks on Alger and Optic. One such screed came from Carl B. Roden, assistant librarian, Chicago Public Library:

> And the small boy who reads these thrillers with staring eyes and boundless faith; grows up contemptuous of books because the only books he read were those of his youth, which were untrue to life as he has found it; who loses faith in himself and the world. That is the substance of the indictment which librarians bring against the widely known and ravenously devoured writings of the redoubtable Oliver Optic, of Horatio Alger, of the Elsie [Dinsmore] books [written by Martha Finley] and all of that ilk; their transparent tawdriness and falsity of plot; their cheap and paltry "written down" style; their general tone and aspect of insubstantiality; like a stick of chewing gum, tickling

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Banish the Books:

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> the palate for the moment with their fleeting flavor, only to turn into a nubbin of sticky nothingness in the end, to be cast out and forgotten. (Roden 393)

Beginning in the 1880s, the introduction of public library services for children and the growing interest in child welfare issues drew the newly emerging cadre of female librarians into a more visible and influential role in defining quality literature for all audiences, especially for the nation's youth. They were critical of the reading matter available to children in public libraries and beyond. Oliver Optic, Horatio Alger, Jr., and others "taught children profanity, vulgarity, brutality, and reliance on luck, which could affect their entire lives" (Willett 88). Children, these librarians argued, need the caring guidance of adults to seek out high-quality reading with appropriate content and style. Quality literature and art would, they believed, lead to sound character and spiritual bearing.

Caroline M. Hewins, director of the Hartford (Connecticut) Public Library, was the first female to address the American Library Association in 1882 and wrote the nation's first juvenile literature selection guide that same year, *Books for the Young: A Guide for Parents and Children*. In 1883 she penned eight columns for **Library Journal,** further solidifying her position as a major arbiter of children's reading standards. Hewins described bad books for children in almost demonic terms:

> I wish that I could tell you of great results, and that the children of Hartford had walked in procession to the Park, and there, Savonarola-like, burned their idols, Alger, Optic, Castlemon, and Elsie; but unfortunately, my regard for truth prevents any such statement. (Qtd. in Bean 221)

Rhetoric aside, Hewins momentarily suspended the guardian's mantle to acquire several Alger and Optic books for the Hartford Public Library (McDowell 166).

Optically Speaking

One notable assault on sensational literature came from within the literary community. Louisa May Alcott, in 1875's *Eight Cousins*, launched a thinly veiled attack on the hyperactive and unrealistic novels in the highly successful Oliver Optic series (Alcott 191–203). Although she does not directly mention Horatio Alger, Jr., the episode deserves our attention because Adams and Alger were nearly interchangeable as writers, and inevitably linked by the public and the reviewers as the most successful purveyors of adventure stories for young people. According to Alcott, too many juvenile novels extolled criminal activity, slangy language, mysterious luck, and sudden success. Speaking through one of her characters, she emphatically criticizes the overwrought portrayals as "*optical* delusions" (198).[4]

Adams responded promptly with pointed prose in **Oliver Optic's Magazine: Our Boys and Girls:**

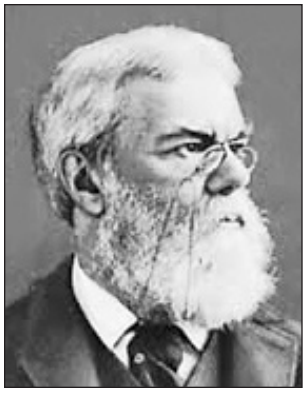
> MISS LOUISE (sic) M. ALCOTT is publishing a story in a magazine. It is called "Eight Cousins." We have read only the portion to which our attention has just been called, and looked over two or three chapters of another portion. It is a critical story; or, at least, it contains a chapter of criticism. The topic is "Sensational Books for Boys," and she treats it as flippantly as though she knew what she was writing about. The mother of the two boys in the story says she "has read a dozen at least of these stories," from which we infer that Miss Alcott has read them; but, judging from some of the quotations she makes, she read them with her elbows ... She mixes things terribly. She quotes from one book, and judges another by what she quotes. She quotes from the Optic books, and then fastens upon them the sins of other books, as we shall presently show ... She seems to have deliberately misrepresented the books she writes about. (Adams 717–18)

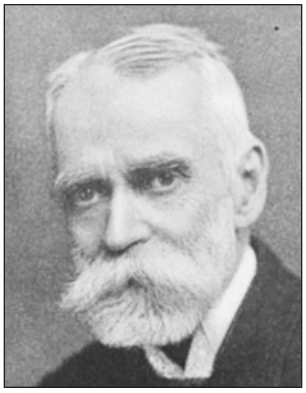
Alcott never responded publically to Adams' rejoinder. The feud was noted in other periodicals such as **The Literary World** ("Literary News" 55), **Appletons' Journal** (Rev. of *Eight Cousins* 601), and **Scribner's Monthly** ("Two Books" 896–97). They uniformly sided with Adams and were mystified over the unprovoked nature of Alcott's acerbic prose. The reason for her diatribe was never revealed and can only be conjectured.

And in the Middle

Although most voices in the great fiction controversy expressed some concern about the harmful effects of sensational literature and called for reducing fiction purchases as well as not replacing worn copies, there were a few raised against suppression and removal. Perhaps ironically, those individuals advocating a generous inclusion of fiction in public libraries were recorded early in the debate and were often identified with the profession's senior leadership.

Prominent pioneer librarians who advocated tolerance and latitude regarding the inclusion of fiction in library collections were William A. Poole, Justin Winsor, Samuel S. Green, William I. Fletcher, and Charles Cutter. All believed in quality collections, in the betterment of patrons,


Justin Winsor


Samuel S. Green


William I. Fletcher


Charles Cutter

and in the steppingstone theory of reader progression. Additional arguments included serving the needs of all members of the community and supporting the value of reading itself.[5]

Only a handful of public libraries actually took the drastic action of removing Alger and others from the shelves. Among these were the Carnegie Free Library of Alleghany, Pennsylvania; the St. Louis (Missouri) Public Library; and the Fletcher Free Library, Burlington, Vermont. Between 1895 and 1910, editorial sentiment in the general press shifted more toward unfettered collections and an anticensorship stance. Removal of the Horatio Alger, Jr., volumes from the Worcester (Massachusetts) Public Library provoked widespread reaction. Noting that Alger's books helped to sever the apron strings and imbued youngsters with an interest in life and the world, one editorial writer suggested that "[i]t is high time for a boys' rebellion in Worcester" (Editorial 2). **The Nation** weighed in with a provocative commentary:

> Much nonsense has been put forth about the regulation of children's reading. This is a late day to attempt a rigid censorship of an urchin's literary acquaintances, and as for leading him, there is probably no method better than that of our grandfathers — to turn him loose in a man's library and let him taste its strong fare. For the rest, any normal boy ought to relish the absurdities of the dime novel and any natural girl ought to be able to wallow in the sentimental fairy tale. Blood-curdling adventure is as necessary to the diet of the one as sugary romance is to that of the other. ("Reading for Children" 563)

In His Own Words

Alger's approach to writing juvenile literature was recorded in several pieces that he wrote during his career. His most revealing statement about his own writing goals and techniques appeared in the 1896 issue of **The Writer.** Alger noted that a boys' writer "should have an abundant sympathy with them, [and] should be able to enter into their plans, hopes, and aspirations" (37). A successful juvenile author, he argued, must write from the boys' point of view and must neither write down to his characters nor incorporate a didactic approach, as such preaching would inevitably be spurned by the young audience. He went on to elaborate upon the primary attributes of his characters:


Worcester (Massachusetts) Public Library.
(From lithographed post card, circa 1910-12)

> Honesty, industry, frugality, and a worthy ambition he can preach through the medium of the story much more effectively than a lecturer or a preacher. I've tried to make my heroes manly boys, bright, cheerful, hopeful, and plucky. Goody-goody boys never win life's prizes. Strong and yet gentle, ready to defend those that are weak, willing to work for their families if called upon to do so, ready to ease the burden that may have fallen upon a widowed mother, or dependent brothers and sisters, such boys are sure to succeed and deserve success. It should not be forgotten that boys like adventure. ("Writing" 36)

For Alger, adventure meant "healthy excitement" (37); the sensational dime novels were objectionable

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Banish the Books:

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and did much harm. He was convinced that many boys had been tempted by such books into "incalculable mischief," and that a boy's life would be better if lived in a "humdrum fashion" rather than succumbing to such "dangerous excitement" (37). Alger's moderate tone was neither endorsed by the supporters of the conflated dime novel/boys' book series nor substantially accepted by the agents of purification; his reluctance to confront his critics probably emboldened them. Further, his support base — young readers — lacked the clout needed to take on the censors.

Reverend Chaney to the Defense

Until recently, mention of Horatio Alger, Jr.'s, name in relation to the fiction controversy is invariably cursory, superficial, and frequently invoked as a writer in less than flattering tones. Trolling Google Books' invaluable database of pre-1925 scanned volumes recently disgorged a major essay on 19th-century juvenile authors. George L. Chaney, a Unitarian minister and acquaintance of Horatio Alger, Jr., now resurfaces as a major contemporary source on the place of Alger in juvenile literature and the proper role of book agencies such as public and school libraries. In a volume on morality, Chaney writes:

Rev. George L. Chaney

> These stories of the street Arabs of New York, their fortunes and misfortunes, their exposures, sufferings, and trials, their struggle for life, and the survival and ultimate success of the fittest and most enterprising of them, have something in them which appeals to the sense of reality in boys ... They have far more nature in them than the better-behaved boys of better-approved books. If they are rough, pert, rowdy, and daredevil, that is what such boys really are. The boy-reader knows this, and he likes the truth of the picture whether he likes the picture or not. (36–37)

Alger's focus on the street urchins is clearly designed to elicit sympathy from the reader, especially those readers from the lower classes who could project their proximity to many of his characters. For Chaney, the realistic nature of the Alger tales is the cement which binds the narrative to young readers. Chaney connects such realism to the essential nature of this audience. He did not support censorship, and he called upon the home, school, library, and church to collaborate on literacy improvement projects.

Surveys, Library Holdings and Book Lending

The effectiveness of the moral crusade against cheap fiction, especially dime novels and selected series books, has not been empirically tested in a comprehensive way. I will employ a multivariable approach to assess the ban's effectiveness: review of published surveys of library holdings, direct examination of library book catalogs, and exploration of a 19-century public library circulation database hosted by Ball State University.

In 1882, during the early years of the censorship episode, the American Library Association Co-Operation Committee sent a survey to 70 public libraries regarding the exclusion of 28 named authors from collections, receiving responses from 30 of them (American Library Association 28). Of these libraries, only three reported no Alger holdings, and the most nonadmitted author, G.W.M. Reynolds, was not found in 20. In 1884, the Bigelow Free Public Library in Clinton, Massachusetts, circulated 35,820 books, and listed the most popular writers of fiction as William T. Adams, Horatio Alger, Jr., M. J. Holmes, and Mrs. Southworth ("Library Economy" 122).

Caroline M. Hewins, reported on a major national survey of children's reading patterns in public libraries which was prepared for the Colombian Exposition of 1893. A national sample of 160 libraries was contacted, with responses received from 152 (945). The most widely read authors, named in 117 of 152 responses, were Louisa May Alcott, Horatio Alger, Jr., Harry Castlemon, Martha Finley, and Oliver Optic (947). Only seven of the libraries were letting these authors' books wear out without replacement (Hewins, "Reading" 944–75).

An 1899 survey of the Stockton, California, public schools asked students about their public library reading habits. Answers were received from 1,269 children, 604 from boys and 665 from girls (523). Louisa May Alcott stood first on the female lists, followed by Sophie May and Martha Finley, then Horatio Alger, Jr. Favorites with the males were Oliver Optic, followed by G.A. Henty, Edward S. Ellis, and Horatio Alger, Jr. (533–34). The inclusion of Alger on both lists is a surprising testament to his loyal and continuing read-

ership over the decades (Vostrovsky 523–34).

In order to determine the extent of Alger holdings in public and mercantile / social libraries, 47 full-text library book catalogs from 19 states were identified via Google Books as relevant for this study. These book catalogs, while geographically diverse and constituting as full an accounting as possible of the catalogs scanned into Google Books to date, must properly be characterized as a nonrandom sample.

Book catalogs were subdivided by four decades from 1870 through 1909. All Alger titles were counted, amounting to 1,081 Alger books in the 47 libraries during the 40 years considered by this study. Mean Alger title holdings per library for the four decades were 18.9, 26.3, 24.0, and 24.6. The first decade, 1870–79, saw only the very beginning of the attack on juvenile fiction. By 1880–89, the debate flourished and the mean title holdings advanced by eight titles, to 26.3. For 1890–99, another decade of continuing attempts to delist Alger and others, the mean title holdings were a remarkably similar 24.0. Moving into the first decade of the 20 century, there were only five libraries represented in the survey, with mean title holdings of 24.6, almost identical to the prior decade.

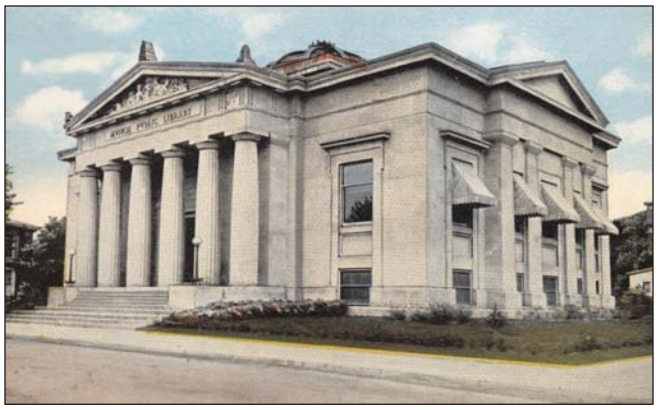
The inevitable conclusion of this book catalog examination is that Alger holdings remained strong and consistent throughout the fiction debate. Further, these results identify the divergence between rhetorical fire and follow-through results. The suitable-fiction debate highlighted the multiplicity of voices and the inability of the emerging library profession to solidify and promulgate a national position.

Horatio Alger, Jr., Public Library Holdings

	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09
No. of Libraries (47)	15	12	15	5
No. of Books (1,081)	283	315	360	123
Mean Average Titles per Library	18.9	26.3	24	24.6

Nineteen states are represented, with the number of libraries in each as follows: CA (3), CO (1), CT (1), DE (1), GA (1), IL (1), IN (2), MA (16), MD (1), ME (1), MI (3), MN (1), MO (2), MT (1), NH (1), NJ (2), NY (4), OH (3), PA (2).[6]

Library book–holding data represent purchase decisions that generally reflect the public's interests. It is possible to create a profile from such data, but generalizations are largely speculative due to the absence of a link to the actual reading of the texts. That gap has just begun to narrow with the appearance of an innovative database of 19th-century circulation transactions, 1891–1902 (with an interruption in 1892–1894), assembled from the archival records of the Muncie (Indiana) Public Library. The project, led by Frank Felsenstein and James Connolly of Ball State University, promises to be a game changer for readership studies.



Muncie (Indiana) Public Library.
(From lithographed post card, circa 1910-12)

Muncie was the subject of *Middletown: A Study in American Culture*, the classic 1929 study by Robert and Helen Lynd. Muncie was ever after referred to as the "average" American town. The Muncie library database, *What Middletown Read*, offers advanced search capability on such variables as patron gender, occupation, and race, all possible by linking the original paper circulation logs to census data. Volumes, registered patrons nd total transactions number 5,972, 4,008, and 175,178, respectively. We can now examine community reading choices in extraordinary detail and be assured that a borrowed book had a far greater chance of being read than a book merely listed in a printed library catalog (Trubek BR43).[7]

Horatio Alger, Jr., was a much-read author in the Muncie Public Library, with 57 books in the collection, 1,361 patrons borrowing his works, and 9,230 circulation transactions to his credit. Female transactions accounted for 27 percent of the total, suggesting that any lingering audience stereotypes should be re-examined.

Alger transactions were divided almost equally between blue-collar (45 percent) and white-collar (55 percent) borrowers, reinforcing his broad socioeconomic reader appeal. Five Alger books appear in the top 20 circulated titles: *The Young Adventurer* (422), *The Telegraph Boy* (364), *The Young Circus Rider* (359), *Ragged Dick* (308), and *The Young Miner* (297). He was responsible for 5.3 percent of all loaned books during this period. He outranked all others in the top 10 most circulated authors: Horatio Alger, Jr. (9,230), Harry Castlemon (7,339), Oliver Optic (5,208), Martha Finley (4,609), Edward S. Ellis (3,004), Edward R. Roe (2,991), Louisa May Alcott (2,976), F. Marion Crawford (2,120), Rosa N. Carey (1,992), and

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Banish the Books:

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Eugenie John (1,823). The list is dominated by juvenile fiction writers. Many authors now in the literary canon barely competed. Mark Twain's 13 books circulated 877 times, with *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* recording 149 loans (*What Middletown Read*).

Reflections

The great fiction debate which consumed public libraries in the last quarter of the 19th century soon snared series book authors such as Horatio Alger, Jr., Oliver Optic, and Martha Finley. Many concerned librarians and citizens pushed for either book purchasing bans or outright removal from library shelves. Although librarians were vocal in the professional literature, many other groups participated, including educators, clergy, editors, and the general public. The first pro-ban salvo was fired in 1875, at least four years earlier than prior scholarship has reported.

Library and education literature discussed the issue of suitable fiction collections, for both adults and children, and this became a story which resonated broadly with the public. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of newspaper reports about changing library practices (often the same story reprinted throughout the nation) appeared during the period. Those favoring some sort of restriction on juvenile literature far outnumbered those who took an anti-ban position. The rediscovered voice of George L. Chaney and his insightful defense of Alger's writings, together with **The Nation's** major essay on popular children's authors, offer a nuanced contemporary analysis. The increasing presence of women in the library profession and their more conservative attitude about exposing children to certain types of literature more often than not came down on the side of some form of restriction (see Garrison).

The survey of library book catalogs reveals very little change over the de- cades in the holdings of Horatio Alger, Jr. The author himself remained silent throughout the controversy due to his own sense of privacy, the presence of an extremely loyal reader base, and the steady appearance of acceptable reviews. A few book reviews were exceptionally positive, but as the years passed the formulaic observations proliferated.

The Muncie Public Library database confirms beyond speculation that Horatio Alger, Jr., was the dominant juvenile author and most read overall by the citizens of this representative Midwestern town. There are a few contemporary reader comments which have survived. One New York Public Library librarian, in 1908, reported on a conversation with a young patron about his Horatio Alger, Jr., reading experience: "Oh! You make me tired about Alger, he always writes about the same 'feller' only under another name, who gets rich quick and you know that's impossible" (Parker 201).

Beginning in the 20th century, many memoirs and autobiographies revealed the authors' affection for and positive memory of the books by Alger they had read in their youth. Among these may be noted Alfred E. Smith, Carl Sandburg, Ernest Hemingway, Herbert H. Lehman, Francis Cardinal Spellman, Joyce Kilmer, Christy Mathewson, Knute Rockne, Mary Antin, and Maya Angelou (Gardner 346–47).

Earlier treatments of the Horatio Alger, Jr., book-banning episode rely heavily on the cornerstone 1971 article by Dee Garrison. She persuasively documented the tendency of many librarians to support some form of restrictions, ranging from limiting acquisitions to outright removal. Garrison drew heavily from published library literature, especially the **Library Journal.** Newspaper accounts were ignored, and digitized library records were decades away. Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales, authors of Alger's standard biography, did not extend Garrison's findings except to note that Alger was in decline as a writer before and during the censorship assault, unable to recapture the ascendant days of the Ragged Dick series (117–20).

Carol Nackenoff 's *The Fictional Republic* is the best thematic study of Alger's place in the sociopolitical fabric of the nation, especially in the intersections between class, capitalism, gender, and definitions of self. She movingly relates the irony of the attack on Alger:

> How ironic that Alger employed character foils who wait for money to drop from the sky and who make money the measure of success . . . It seems a striking irony that Alger, whose fiction so strongly argued *against* passivity, who rewarded the boy who remembered duties to family and community, and who reminded readers that great fortunes were unusual, had become a menace to the Republic. (Nackenoff 256; original emphasis)

Alger's emphasis on character development and the primacy of education — attributes overlooked by many critics — failed to attenuate demands for more realistic fiction and could not neutralize escalating criticism of the capitalist system. The rhetorical daggers hurled against Alger and others were more broadly based than the library community itself, as reported by previous observers, but the arguments and proposed sanctions did not result in the pervasive reductions in Alger library holdings sometimes implied by these scholars. The Alger narrative, ascendant and pragmatic at best, mundane

and disconnected at worst, did not communicate with perfect pitch, leaving room for multiple interpretations. The censors agreed on an intrusive social control agenda, but spoke with diverse tongues. The result was a tug of war with no clear winner.

We may now safely conclude that a significant number of library book removals and book-buying boycotts did not materialize. This finding reinforces the importance of cross-validating rhetorical content with data sets such as library holdings and transaction information to formulate a more finely calibrated assessment of rhetorical intention and subsequent effectiveness.

Notes

1. Both Michael Denning and Joseph M. Hawes refer to the suspected connection between delinquency and dime novels throughout their works.

2. See Paul J. Erickson and Dawn Fisk Thomsen for more detail on the dime novel controversy and its consequences for other genres.

3. See Wiegand, "American Library Association Executive Board Members, 1876–1917: A Collective Profile," and Wiegand and Steffens, "Members of the Club: A Look at One Hundred ALA Presidents."

4. See John T. Dizer and Sarah A. Wadsworth for extended commentaries on the Alcott/Adams exchange.

5. See Carrier, ch. 5.

6. List of library book catalogs by state, subdivided by date of publication:

CA: *Catalogue of the Sacramento Free Public Library by Authors and Titles* (1883); *Catalogue of Books Added to San Francisco Free Public Library Since May, 1884* (1888); *Finding List of books in the Riverside Public Library* (1902).

CO: *Finding List of Books Except [Adult] Fiction in the Public Library of the City of Denver* (1903).

CT: *Catalogue of the Norfolk Library, Norfolk, Connecticut* (1907).

DE: *Catalogue of the Wilmington Institute Library* (1875).

GA: *Catalogue of the Young Men's Library of Atlanta* (1884).

IL: *Catalogue of English Prose Fiction and Juvenile Books in the Chicago Public Library* (1898).

IN: *Catalogue of Public Library of Indianapolis* (1873); *Catalogue of the Public Library of Evansville* (1876).

MA: *Second Catalogue of the Holton Library of Brighton* (1872); *Catalogue of the Free Public Library of the City of Lawrence* (1873); *Catalogue of the Public Library of Brookline* (1873); *Catalogue of the Public Library of Fall River* (1874); *Catalogue of the Southbridge Public Library* (1876); *Catalogue of the Public Library of Haverhill* (1878); *Catalogue of Books in the Jamaica Plain Branch Library of the Boston Public Library* (1878); *Catalogue of the Library of the Morse Institute, Natick, Mass.* (1882); *Medfield Public Library Catalogue* (1890); *Catalogue of the South End Branch Library of the Boston Public Library* (1883); *Catalogue of the Everett Public Library* (1890); *Medfield Public Library Catalogue, 1890* (1890); *Finding List of the Public Library of the City of Somerville, Mass.* (1895); *Free Public Library [Worcester]. Second Supplement to the Catalogue Issued in 1894 of the Circulating and a Portion of the Intermediate Departments* (1896); *Catalogue of the Groton Public Library of Groton, Mass*. (1896); *Catalogue of the Weston Town Library* (1896).

MD: *The Enoch Pratt Free Public Library of Baltimore City. Finding List of Books and Periodicals in the Central Library. Part I. Prose Fiction and Juveniles, Poetry and Drama, Foreign Literature* (1893).

ME: *Catalogue of Books in the Portland Public Library* (1890).

MI: *Catalogue of the Sage Library of West Bay City, Michigan* (1886); *Catalogue of English Prose Fiction and Juvenile Books [Detroit Public Library]* (1886); *Catalogue of Three Rivers Public Library of the Town of Lockport, Michigan* (1889).

MN: *Finding List of English Prose Fiction and Books for the Young [Minneapolis Public Library]* (1890).

MO: *Classified Catalogue of the St. Louis Mercantile Library* (1874); *First Annual Report of the Free Public Library of St. Joseph, MO* (1897).

MT: *Catalogue of Books of the Butte Free Public Library* (1894).

NH: *Catalogue of the Books in the Dover Public Library, Dover, N. H.* (1892).

NJ: *Finding List of the Free Public Library of Newark, N.J.* (1889); *Finding List of the Free Public Library of Jersey City, N. J.* (1891).

NY: *Finding List of the Apprentices' Library Established and Maintained by The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York* (1888); *Catalogue of English Prose Fiction Including Juveniles and Translations [Brooklyn Public Library]* (1894); *Catalogue of the Harlem Library* (1894); *Catalogue of the Hampton Library, Bridge-Hampton, Long Island* (1900).

OH: *Catalogue of the Books in the Department of English Prose Fiction Which Belong to the Public Library of Cincinnati* (1876); *Classified Catalogue of Cleveland Public Library* (1877); *Catalogue of the Dayton Public Library* (1884).

PA: *Catalogue of the Mercantile Library of Pennsylvania* (1870); *Index Catalogue of the Erie Public Library* (1894).

7. Approximately 20 percent of the Horatio Alger, Jr., transaction records by gender and occupation are not yet coded. The high percentage of transactions which are fully

(Continued on Page 14)

Banish the Books:

(Continued from Page 13)

coded contains significant, indicative data. According to the database codirector, coding gaps are being reviewed to refine the database (Felsenstein).

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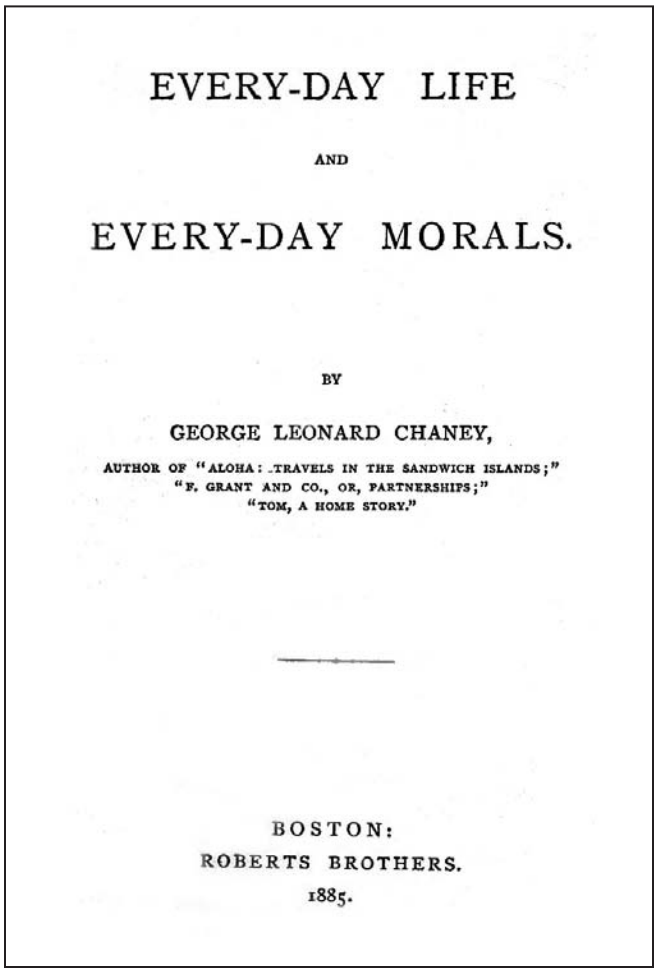

EVERY-DAY LIFE

AND

EVERY-DAY MORALS.

BY

GEORGE LEONARD CHANEY,

AUTHOR OF "ALOHA: TRAVELS IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS;"
"F. GRANT AND CO., OR, PARTNERSHIPS;"
"TOM, A HOME STORY."

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1885.

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* * *

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The **Newsboy** scanning and index projects

(Continued from Page 6)

10 – Interview
11 – In Memoriam
12 – **Newsboys**
13 – NIU (Northern Illinois University)
14 – Other writers
15 – Published references
16 – Publishers
17 – Research
18 – Stamp (the Alger commemorative stamp)
19 – Westgard (his unique contributions)

I intentionally did not include or record collections of photos, consignment/auction sales, or other donor lists.

These categories are not set in concrete. They are offered as a guide in the quagmire of study, or a lifeline for the less adventurous.

I am positive that my efforts are not without mistakes. I humbly ask for your tolerance and acceptance, proffering corrections — not for my sake, but for the good of all.

Now that my goal has been achieved, I have been in discussion with Bob Huber as to what is the best way to post it on on the official H.A.S. website. An Excel spreadsheet containing the index, a sorted index and separate listings of each category is currently available on our website. Just click on the "Newsboy" tab. Even though we do not post the most recent two years of **Newsboy**, the index is current with the last issue.

Please contact me at eastlackrd@yahoo.com for any additions, corrections or suggestions.

This work would not have been accomplished without the valuable assistance of Bob Huber, Bill Gowen, Brad Chase, Jack Bales and Deidre Johnson. Thank you one and all.

I've enjoyed the challenge. Now I want to explore in depth those articles dealing with Publishers and Research, areas of my personal interest.

First glance at 'Fame and Fortune in Columbus'

(Continued from Page 3)

Friday, May 1. More information on the auction will be provided in the upcoming two issues of **Newsboy**.

Places of interest in Columbus and central Ohio include the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Center of Science and Industry (COSI), Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Ohio History Center, German Village, the Ohio Theatre and the Thurber House. Other sights include the campus of The Ohio State University and the historic Ohio State House, whose cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1839.

There are several antique malls and used-book stores in Columbus, along with two enormous antique malls 40 miles west of the city in Springfield, Ohio, on Interstate 70.

More information of area places of interest will be published in upcoming issues of **Newsboy,** and handouts will be available in the H.A.S. hospitality room upon your arrival on April 30.

The Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport Hotel will be the site of the 2015 Horstio Alger Society convention on April 30-May 3.

BOOK MART

Huge collection of quality Alger books for sale

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at **PTL777anyway@live.com**

Many titles from Bob Bennett's prize collection. Detailed condition given for every item.

The following downloads are available. E-mail me for those of interest to you:

- Serializations — Ragged Dick, Robert Coverdale,The Tin Box, A New York Boy, Silas Snobden's Office Boy, The Erie Train Boy, A.D.T. 79, $500 and many more.
- Loring — 58 books (25 First Editions, including *Ragged Dick, Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving*).
- Porter & Coates — Includes 15 First Editions, plus matched sets of Ragged Dick Series format, etc.
- Henry T. Coates — Includes 7 First Editions.
- Penn — 3 First Editions, including *The Odds Against Him* and *The Young Musician*.
- Ogilvie and Thompson & Thomas — First Edition of *A Rolling Stone* and several near-firsts.
- A.L. Burt deluxe books — Chase's formats 1 to 18; includes 5 First Editions.
- Mershon, Stitt and C-P — Includes 5 First Editions.
- Misc. first-edition publishers — 5 First Editions, including *The Western Boy, Bertha's Christmas Vision* and *Abraham Lincoln, the Backwoods Boy*.
- Lupton and Lovell — *Abner Holden's Bound Boy* and first hard-cover editions of *Number 91, The Five Hundred Dollar Check* and *Tom Tracy*.
- Aldine Garfield Library — 4 sets of 4 issues each.
- S&S paper covers — Medal and New Medal Library; total of 56 S&S PC (34 VG/VG+).
- Boys Home Weekly — All 33 as listed in Bennett.
- Brave and Bold Weekly — All 14 as listed in Bennett.
- Deluxe hard-cover reprint publishers — Caldwell, David McKay, S&S HC, etc.
- Winston Library Series — Bob Sawyer's collection of 26 titles, many with bright gold spines.
- Recent publications — 19 First Editions (incl. Sawyer) plus Book Club's *The Young Miner*.
- Books of limited interest — Dust jackets & Hurst miniatures (just a few).

For new collectors, several of the specific titles listed above may be out of your price range. A broad range of beautiful reprints are available to augment your collection.

William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.:

Some cautionary evidence of their working relationship

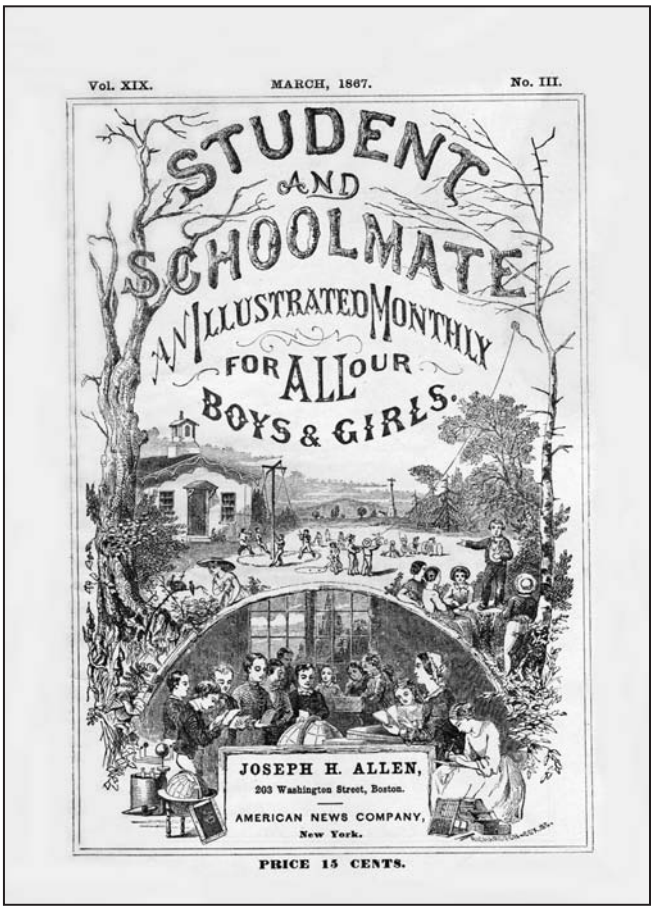
By Peter C. Walther (PF-548)
(Part 2 — Conclusion)

Some years later we would have liked to program William T. Adams and Horatio Alger as joint platform partners, but unfortunately that never materialized. The initial meeting of the "Eastern Amateur Press Association" was held at the St. Nicholas Hotel in New York City on Saturday, Jan. 27, 1872. Horatio Alger, Jr. and William T. Adams were both elected honorary members at that time. Alger, who was himself present on that occasion (Adams was not), was called upon to make a speech and complied with a few interesting remarks.

The third such meeting of this amateur group was held in Boston at the St. James Hotel a year later on Jan. 25, 1873. On this occasion, Adams was present, Alger was not. It was recorded that one of the features of this meeting was an address by "Oliver Optic," the "Patron Saint" of amateur journalism. What did he say? As an amateur newspaper from Camden, New Jersey, the **Star of the East,** reported in its March 1873 issue: "At the banquet the world renowned 'Oliver Optic' made a speech congratulating them on the success of the Convention." As honorary members, both Alger and Adams gave speeches at these "Eastern Amateur Press Association" conclaves but not within concurrent years.

Did they meet during the period these events were held under the auspices of those neophyte authors? Probably not. As a matter of fact, the **Young Sportsman,** one of the most famous of all amateur newspapers, published by W.L. Terhune in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, announced that they have "just issued in neat style, a correct photograph of 'Oliver Optic' and Horatio Alger, Jr., (the two great juvenile writers of the century,) on *one* neat card. Sent post-paid for 15 cents" (June 1872).

It is something of an amusing phenomenon and may indeed be true that the closest Alger and Adams ever got to one another was as colleagues on a pasteboard card issued from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Incidentally,



I have never seen this card and wonder if any of the Horatio Alger Society members have. The photographs themselves may represent the common images we have all seen of our heroes, yet curiosity will no doubt compel a few of us (myself included) at some point to seek it out.

We also have some Sunday School records to support these arguments. William T. Adams was a very Christian-minded individual and a devout disciple of the Bible. He was a practicing Unitarian from his youngest years and throughout most of his life attended the First Unitarian Church on Meeting House Hill in the Boston district of Dorchester where he resided. By the way, the church is still standing (rebuilt in replica one year following an 1896 fire) as well as the hill, and some years ago we had access to the records kept of the Sunday School classes held there during the 1850s and 1860s. Adams as Superintendent more times than not addressed the pupils on a variety of religious and moral topics.

Occasionally, however, there were visitors in attendance who spoke in his place. One such was Joseph H. Allen, the publisher of **Student and Schoolmate**, visiting this Unitarian parish on multiple occasions, ad-

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This article was presented as the keynote address at the Horatio Alger Society convention in Annapolis, Maryland on May 3, 2014. Part 1 appeared in the September-October issue.

William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.

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dressing the scholars of the Sunday School. The period we canvassed for this study was April 1856 through December 1864. The photocopies made at that time were not the clearest because the ink had begun to fade a bit. However, we can offer the following with a reasonable amount of certainty:

The first visit of Mr. Allen occurred on Sept. 19, 1858, as follows: "Mr. Joseph H. Allen of Boston visited the school to-day and addressed the children upon preparing for life. It was a good address. School has been very pleasant this morning." The following occasion was a misfire: "Mr. Ansorge opened the school, and we expected an address from Mr. J. H. Allen, who was to preach for us, but he arrived too late" (Sept. 2, 1860).

First Unitarian Parish Church, Dorchester, Mass. (From lithographed post card, circa 1910)

The next address by Allen was on June 21, 1863: "Mr. Joseph H. Allen kindly addressed the school, our Superintendent [Adams] conducting the opening exercises. Mr. A. spoke of the hopes which rested upon the young, upon the members of Sunday Schools, and to them we must look for aid and help in the future, upon them depends the future welfare of our country." Allen's admission in the **Sunday School Gazette** the following December of a close association with his "long known and intimate friend Oliver Optic" now carries more weight than a mere magazine editorial might have allowed.

Some weeks later, on September 6, Allen was welcomed once again: "Mr. Adams conducted the opening services, and Mr. J.H. Allen made an interesting address upon 'Trust in God,' and illustrated this idea by examples wh[ich] made it simple and attractive. In the course of his address he made an appeal in behalf of Lawrence, Kansas."

Allen's reference to Lawrence, Kansas, will not be lost on history buffs. Quantrill's Raiders were notorious members of an aggressive band of Confederate guerillas and represented nothing less than a vigilante group. They attacked the pro-Union town of Lawrence, Kansas, on August 21, 1863, in which over 150 men were either incinerated or shot to death. It was a massacre in the fullest sense of the word, not a battle but a mass execution, and certainly one of the bloodiest chapters of the Civil War. Yet another example of "bleeding Kansas."

Allen returned again on June 26, 1864: "Mr. J.H. Allen addressed the school this morning, Mr. Adams making the opening prayer, and [indecipherable word] reading from the Scriptures. Mr. Allen spoke in a very interesting and impressive manner of the nature of Mr. Barry's Mission, and with much feeling alluded to some cases of wrong-doing, wh[ich] had come under his notice, and which he thought might have been prevented, had the boys who committed them been under Mr. Barry's care. Mr. Adams also said something touching similar topics. The scholars seemed much impressed by the remarks ..."

On November 27 of the same year, the Sunday School secretary recorded the following: "Mr. Adams opened the school, and Mr. J.H. Allen spoke to us in behalf of the Sunday School Society. A committee from the school was appointed to solicit subscriptions for annual and life-members of the Society."

It should also be remarked that a certain "Mr. Alger" likewise was a visitor to William T. Adams' Unitarian Sunday School. Lest any of you become too

overwrought, I should unequivocally state that he was probably not our Horatio. The Algers whom we most often encounter comprise a threesome: Rev. Alger Sr., Rev. Alger Jr. and a cousin, William Rounseville Alger. The documentation at my disposal here records only one visit, that on Dec. 16, 1860: "Mr. Alger spoke in a very interesting way to the children, and our pastor officiated at the commencement." Doesn't tell us much, unfortunately.

We know from Scharnhorst and Bales' *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.,* that Rev. Horatio Alger, Sr. assumed his new pastorate in Natick, Massachusetts, in October 1860. Alger, Jr. had embarked on an extended trip to Europe only the month before in company with a college chum and a cousin. The named Alger therefore who visited Dorchester was probably none other than William Rounseville Alger, who according to Wikipedia was residing in Boston during this period and serving a church of his own, and Horatio's cousin as well. I am unclear how some of these pastors apparently enjoyed free rein to visit other churches on a rotating basis when they should nominally have been serving their own for Sunday services. Yet the possibility also exists that the Mr. Alger in question was another individual altogether.

I have a very interesting photograph in my collection that I unfortunately cannot locate, yet it is lurking about somewhere, to be sure. Sometime in the early 1980s I met up with John R.M. Alger, a Manager of Market Development and Planning for the General Electric Company. On a Saturday morning I drove Ellen Cochrane Berry, Oliver Optic's great-great-granddaughter, from her home in Spencertown to Mr. Alger's office in Schenectady, New York, where said photograph was taken. Seated around a table were the Alger and the Adams' descendants together for the first time. Although as we know, Horatio had no children (his brother James did), John on the other hand was William Rounseville Alger's great-grandson. And I have the family tree in his own handwriting still to prove it. Maybe this would not represent a direct link to Horatio Alger for the purists, but it was good enough for Ellen, good enough for John Alger, and it is good enough for me.

Research makes strange bedfellows often enough as not. In the Sunday School records quoted above there is a link, albeit a somewhat indirect one, to Horatio Alger, Jr. On June 21, 1857, the Sunday School secretary made the following entry:

> "The pastor spoke to the children this morning upon true heroism, and illustrated his subject by relating a very interesting anecdote of John Maynard, a helmsman on one of our western lakes. The boat in which he was caught fire, but he heroically kept his post, steering the boat toward the shore. The flames rolled near him, the smoke almost suffocated him, still he moved not. The boat reached the shore. John Maynard was not to be found in the intense heat that probably deprived him of his senses, and he had fallen into the water, a sacrifice to his heroic efforts to save the lives of others. Mr. Hall [the church's pastor] compared his heroism to that of Warren, the inauguration of whose statue had been celebrated on the 17th. Was not John Maynard the greater hero of the two?"

William T. Adams

Horatio Alger, Jr.

The reference here to Warren was probably Joseph Warren, the Revolutionary War patriot who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Warren, too, was a hero in his own right but the qualified comparison here quite eludes me. "John Maynard, A Ballad of Lake Erie," Alger's most famous poem and extensively reprinted, first appeared in 1862, according to Bob Bennett's bibliography.

A classic syllogism fits the facts at this point. "All cats are animals, all dogs are animals; therefore all cats are dogs." This aberration of logic applies in this case. We know that Adams and Allen enjoyed some camaraderie based on Allen's farewell editorial quoted above, as well as the handwritten Sunday School records. Alger certainly enjoyed an esteemed friendship with Allen (a "friendly regard" as he termed it), based not only on the remarks he made to Frank Lee Farnell but also in the dedication to Joseph H. Allen of his now classic *Ragged Dick*.

The hypothesis, however, that Adams and Alger were acquainted one with the other, certainly on a personal level anyway, is another matter altogether and still unfortunately lacks definitive proof. It is a hypothesis that needs further scholarly attention. Future investigative

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William T. Adams and Horatio Alger, Jr.

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research may yet uncover letters or personal accounts in which this can be documented as fact. Until then, we can only simply stir this quagmire further with possibilities and fanciful arguments as to what might have occurred or what we would like to imagine might have occurred.

As Oliver Optic lay bedridden during his final illness, he apparently was not forgotten by Horatio Alger. In a letter to his friend Irving Blake dated March 18, 1897, from Natick, Alger wrote:

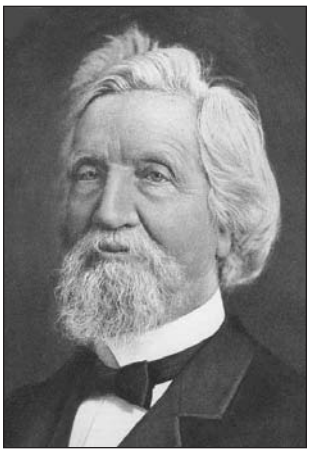
> "The news that touches me most nearly is that Oliver Optic is dying. It is thought he cannot live many days. He returned about three weeks since from a winter trip to Bermuda [it was actually Jamaica]. He found it excessively hot there, and when he got back he was in a weakened state. The transition from a hot climate to our raw New England temperature was perilous. He was born Aug. [July] 1822. Heart and kidney troubles complicate his case. He has but one child, Mrs. Sol Smith Russell. His life has been happy and successful and he will leave behind an enviable record."

A week later, on March 25 he wrote again to Blake:

> "Your letters at hand. W.T. Adams still lingers owing to his vitality but there isn't one chance in 50 [?] of his living. He is so weak that he can hardly raise his hand. He cannot bear any food on [in] his stomach. His liver and kidneys are affected and he has a good deal of pain. I obtained this information from his publisher yesterday."

Alger was correct; the end was very near. William T. Adams died at his home, 1479 Dorchester Avenue in Boston, at nine o'clock in the morning on Saturday, March 27, 1897. Coincidentally, I would like to add that exactly 85 years later, on another Saturday morning at nine o'clock as well, March 27, 1982, another Adams, Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, earned her own place in the venerated pantheon of juvenile authors.

Mr. Adams' funeral was held on Wednesday, March 31. According to the published account in the **Boston Journal**, among those present were Horatio Alger, as well as John Townsend Trowbridge and Benjamin H. Ticknor, who had become a partner in the firm of the Boston publishing house that originated as Ticknor and Fields. Even Alger's old acquaintance, Aaron K. Loring, was there as well as many of the deceased's friends and colleagues from Lee and Shepard. Whatever Alger's thoughts may have been on that sad day will probably never be known.



John T. Trowbridge

Benjamin H. Ticknor

What we can offer in conclusion is that, while both authors initially labored for the Boston weeklies during the 1850s — and we have only to cite numerous references to the columns of **True Flag** and **American Union** as examples — they decided to branch out into the juvenile market in much the same fashion. Adams assumed editorship of the **Student and Schoolmate** in November 1857 and wrote steadily for its pages until December 1866. Alger, 10 years his junior, was a relative newcomer yet he too launched his career as a juvenile author in the same magazine, and wrote prolifically for it until its demise by November 1872.

I should like to believe that Adams knew talent when he encountered it, and by giving Horatio Alger a sporting opportunity to become a steady and valued contributor to his magazine, he paved the way for an author whose reputation eventually eclipsed his own. Whatever their temperaments may have been in the long run, the only kind of relationship that mattered, professional or otherwise, was the assistance and support one bestowed upon the other. Both were individuals of integrity and honesty, and were firmly grounded in Biblical precepts. As practicing Christians, the parable of the "Good Samaritan" and the exhortations of "The Sermon On The Mount" would not have been lost on either.

For a short period, anyway, they enjoyed a mutual dependency and neither was found wanting. We have only to read the novels of Oliver Optic and Horatio Alger to recognize the value of what they gifted to the world of letters. We grasp both their hands with profound respect and a deep abiding affection.