



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

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

1832 - 1899

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NUMBER 2

THE HORATIO ALGER NEWSBOY

Vol. 1 No. 4
Distribution 400
October 1962
A Newsletter

Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed at the expense of Forrest Campbell, 14...
Greetings! Welcome! 100 of you have been added since the last edition...
Our respect to oblige the Public Library in Reverse, Mass. The birthplace of our hero, must be reviewed for the benefit of our new Readers. The Librarian, Mrs. Alfred Howell, has given us the green light and will keep the donated books under our protection and protected from handling...
Beginning alphabetically, this month we have heard from one of our recent...
Regaining alphabetically, this month we have heard from one of our recent...
Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed by Forrest Campbell, 588 Pilgrim, Kalamazoo, Michigan...
Vol. 1 No. 2
Distribution 100

Some thoughts about the birth of Newsboy

NEWSBOY

Vol. 1 No. 2
Distribution 100
August 1962

Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed by Forrest Campbell, 588 Pilgrim, Kalamazoo, Michigan...
Greetings! Welcome! Many of us are now acquainted...
From your many responses, I am unable to select one and say, "This one, I prize the most!"...
I do enjoy making new friends as well as to keep the old ones...
I must acknowledge the loyal support of our friend Kenneth B. Butler of Mendota, Illinois who is designing a method...
I was born in the State of New York, at New York City...
I have just returned from a planned trip to the East Coast to New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and North Carolina...
I have been in and out of the State of Illinois for some time...
I have been in and out of the State of Illinois for some time...
I have been in and out of the State of Illinois for some time...

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PLEASE TURN TO SECTION 2
PLEASE TURN TO SECTION 3

Fourth issue, October 1962.

Second issue, August 1962.

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Debut issue, July 1962.

2015 convention preview: Sightseeing in Columbus

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President's column

Collectors of all kinds fascinate me, fictional as well as real-life. Keller, one of the protagonists of the excellent detective novelist Lawrence Sanders, is a hit man. Despite Keller's extreme efficiency and formidable success rate as a hired killer, Sanders succeeds in humanizing him throughout the series as he acquires and loses custody of a pet, serves on a jury, undergoes a midlife crisis, sees a therapist, becomes a father, and worries about his retirement.

Best of all from my standpoint, Keller becomes an avid stamp collector and is often juggling pursuit of his hobby with the attempt to complete his latest murderous assignment. At one point, Keller reflects as he chases his quarry that "The man flew first class, the man bought and discarded great quantities of clothing, the man spent money like he didn't know what to do with it. Therefore, he wasn't a stamp collector, because a stamp collector always knew what to do with money. He bought stamps with it. Keller, faced with the choice of tourist and first-class air travel, couldn't help doing the math and translating the difference into potential philatelic purchases. The difference on this flight, for instance, would pay for a couple of mint high values from the set Canada issued in 1898 for Victoria's jubilee. Keller, given the choice, would have taken the less comfortable seat and the stamps" (Lawrence Sanders, *Hit List* [New York: HarperCollins, 2000], 337).

Lawrence Sanders may not be a philatelist, but I cannot help but feel that the man who wrote these words must collect something. Certainly, I have made precisely this calculation many times when considering some potential expenditure and translating it into the number of books I might be able to acquire if I found a cheaper alternative.

Perhaps as you consider your travel options for the upcoming convention in Columbus, you may have had thoughts very similar to Keller's in deciding whether to drive or fly. I very much hope that you will wind up deciding on a solution that enables you to join us in Ohio. Our host, Bob Huber has put together an excellent program in an interesting venue, and we are anticipating a good turnout. I look forward to seeing you there.

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

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.

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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

Some thoughts about the birth of Newsboy

By Brad Chase (PF-412)

Understanding history sometimes unlocks mysteries and often provides reasons for things to be the way they are. What happened many years ago offers us an opportunity to dig into the richness of our past and find a new appreciation of people and events. Whether it's researching our immediate family's genealogy or focusing on specific past events such as the early evolution of the Horatio Alger Society, we can be enlightened and enriched by what we find.

Did you ever wonder about the thousands of actions undertaken over time by many caring people to build what we have today as a Horatio Alger Society? We have annual conventions every spring, award programs, book auctions and a newsletter connecting us to our Alger hobby and friends. An active, viable organization has provided us the opportunity to easily connect with other collectors who have similar interests. Now all of this didn't just come about by accident. Many good people have worked very hard to bring about what we enjoy today and almost take for granted.

Take *Newsboy*, for example. It arrives at our home every few months and we eagerly digest the articles to better understand our hobby and learn about the collecting activities of our fellow Alger bibliophiles. Some research is usually presented about Alger and/or other contemporary writers and their books, all reinforced with attractive graphics that amaze our senses and appreciate the skills of our editor. It is just fun to read *Newsboy* and be kept up to date. A while ago, Society members were even spellbound reading interviews with Mr. Alger, The Man himself! What a pleasure it is to occasionally lose oneself in this type of recess, taking us away for a few pleasurable moments from a world that seems to be falling apart.

Newsboy certainly keeps us attuned to what is going on in our hobby. Without it we'd be either alone or huddled in small groups trying to discover things for ourselves. Over the past 50 years Bill Gowen and others like Forrest Campbell, Ken Butler, Carl Hartmann, Jack Bales, and Gil Westgard, who form our list of Editors, launched and virtually grew a small and folksy newsletter into a sophisticated, carefully presented, scholarly magazine widely respected

FIRST EDITION	THE NEWSBOY	VOL. 1 NO. 1
JULY	1962	

Published in the interest of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Alger.
Prepared and distributed by Forrest Campbell, 5868 Pilgrim (R5) Kalamazoo, Michigan

Greetings Everyone! Let's get acquainted! Tho we are strangers, yet we are friends; for we have one thing in common; We both have an interest in Alger. How does one become interested in Alger? We no doubt differ in this respect; Here's how it was with me: I was born on an October day in 1905; Friday the 13th to be exact; The same as Horatio tho not the same month, nor of course the same year. I was born in an Era rich with evidence of a famous and popular Author. Only six years separated his world from mine. Can a person be forgotten in such a short period of time? Was Horatio forgotten? His books were still being published as late as 1910; In this same year, I migrated with my folks from my native State of Illinois to a Swiss Settlement in southern Wisconsin; Returning after a few all the enjoyable years to grow up in the shadow of the State House, where Lincoln, the Backwoods Boy, first began his political career. My childhood was rich with Alger. Our school books which were few, were handed down from an older brother along with his Alger books. We literally held a text book in one hand and an Alger in the other. We learned the three Rs and how a boy could succeed in New York at the same time; But there comes a time in the life of every boy when he must choose between his treasures at home and the treasures which lie ahead in some distant place. I didn't see any further need for Alger books and they are left behind; Weren't yours? However absence makes the heart grow fonder, especially after forty years when I once more seek the treasures of my youth, Those Alger books! This is what makes me interested in Alger. I am now a Postal employee; I carry the U.S. Mail. My family is raised; I have three grandchildren. Who was Alger? They ask, when admiring my Library. Fill their grandchildren ask the same question? It is up to us to preserve the memories as well as to check the thoughtless destruction of our dwindling stock of our Alger books for our Heirs. Why do we need a Newsletter? That purpose will it serve? It can serve as a central point where information may be exchanged between you and I and other Interested Alger Fans and learn of their locations and their needs. During the time in which I have been interested in Collecting books by Horatio Alger, I have found that he who attempts to keep his hobby a secret will lead a lonely life. I myself, in the past felt that I dare not reveal my hobby until I have my Library complete; But then I met another collector of Alger who was willing to share his interests and duplicate books with me and with others. This person being, Kenneth B. Butler of 1325 Burlington Road, Mendota, Ill. Since then, through association with other collectors, I have made many friends and my own library has grown accordingly. I have had the pleasure of encouraging others to share my interests and limited knowledge of our hobby. I want you to share with us, your experiences and comments. One of the newest of Collectors, Jean Steiner, of R2 Berkeley Springs, West Virginia has just uncovered an early edition of "Helen Ford and is she ever Happy about that. PLEASE WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT EDITION, OUT AUGUST 1,

I have just returned from a planned trip to the East Coast; to Revere, Massachusetts; formerly known as North Chelsea and it is found on the near north side of Boston. As I turned onto Broadway, the Main Street of Revere, I drove into a service station to refuel. I casually asked the Attendant about Horatio Alger, but he did not catch the name and asked me to repeat it. Naw--reese Sho--val--yer? He asked; (perhaps it was my Michigan accent) I could see that it was not getting anywhere and asked instead, for the Public Library. Upon locating the Library, I found that it would not be open until the afternoon. Discouraged and disgusted, I was about to leave Revere when I thought of the many miles that I had come for this purpose and I decided to make one last attempt. I was passing City Hall and I stopped; I was about to ask for the Chamber of Commerce when I thought of the local Press; I asked if there was a local Paper and was informed that there was and was directed to it. I was received with much courtesy and interest after the nature of my visit was announced. I learned that only last January, the Editorial Staff honored Horatio's birthday with an article about one of their favorite Sons. My audience was inspired with my interest which had brought me so many miles and with the interest of all other Alger Fans over the Nation. We traded and shared information for at least a half hour and I was assured that in an early issue, if not the next edition, they would print another article regarding my visit and the National interest in Alger. After proudly displaying some of my prized books from my collection, I left with a large supply of Revere Journals under my arm and with directions on how to find 82 Beach Street, the birthplace of our Hero. I learned to my disappointment that there was no street named after Horatio nor Alger; However, there is a Fenno Street; Horatio's mother came from the Fenno Family. I found the street and the house which is just off Broadway and to add to my enjoyment, Mrs. Joseph (Anna) Gallant, the present occupant was at home; I was invited in and had the pleasure of standing in the parlor of Horatio's boyhood home; I felt welcome and was even accepted by Columbia, the cat and household pet. Mrs. Gallant was very courteous and willingly answered all my questions and after taking movies of the house from the street, I felt that my trip was worthwhile after all. After spending the balance of the day in Boston, I then turned in the direction of South Natick, The final resting place of our Hero, which is the Glenwood Cemetery and in the extreme right hand corner from the center entrance. There is one monument about seven foot tall in the center of the plot with small stones marking the resting places of others in his married sister's family. As I stood there in the twilight hours of the summer evening; I strongly felt that we who know Horatio only from his life's work; are basking in the twilight of his memories; I now felt that I had honored our Hero according to my ability having visited his place of beginning and ending. That went on in between will be discussed and disputed for ages to come.

The one-page first issue of *Newsboy*, published in mimeograph by H.A.S. co-founder Forrest Campbell in July 1962.

within collecting circles today.

You must wonder why these thoughts come to my mind. Essentially, I think we all have just accepted that the Society was there and never really examined how and why it was formed and how its basic principles were put into place. I knew vaguely that some type of organization

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Editor's notebook

We're about a month and a half from our 2015 convention, "Fame and Fortune in Columbus," and as a final reminder and perhaps incentive for you to attend, additional copies of the official registration form and schedule of events are enclosed.

Convention host Bob Huber has lined up a very interesting program, along with enough free time to see what Ohio's capital city has to offer. A few additional Columbus photos shot by your editor are on Page 16.

In our January-February preview issue it was noted we hoped to give you a few details about our annual auction in this issue, and so far we have large consignments from the collections of former H.A.S. president Art Young and longtime member William Thieme.

Over the past few years, Art has been reducing his Alger collection, and most of his first editions and quality reprints have now found homes with other H.A.S. members and Alger enthusiasts. However, over the years he also built a large collection of Alger-related material which he is now consigning to the H.A.S. auction. Included are original periodicals containing Alger short stories and serials, along with a selection of Alger books in foreign editions. There is also printed material related to Horatio Alger's years at Harvard, including a student class list. Also of interest is a group of vintage "Authors" card games, with and without Alger.

Thieme's Alger collection includes 100-plus books by quality publishers, including Loring, Porter & Coates, Henry T. Coates, Penn, A.L. Burt, David McKay, Street & Smith and John C. Winston. There are some first editions, but not a large number. This is a collection that was assembled with care and an eye toward condition.

In terms of formats, there are large groups of P&C Brown Apple editions, Luck & Pluck Series (Flying Wheel), Brave & Bold Series (Lion), Way to Success (Bee Hive) etc. The Henry T. Coates formats, include Tattered Tom Series and Ragged Dick Series reprints. The A.L. Burt deluxe editions include Gold Tulip, Green Tulip and Three Circles, along with books published in the Chimney Corner Series applique cover formats.

The Winstons include about 20 titles in the deluxe Library Edition binding, and the full run of 11 Stratemeyer completions includes four Mershons, one Stitt, five Grosset & Dunlaps and one Cupples & Leon.

All in all, this is a very nice group of books that should draw high interest from potential bidders. And,



City Barbecue, with several locations in the Columbus area, operates this restaurant in Gahanna.

of course, additional auction items will likely be brought to the convention by members.

A fine place to eat: Above is a photo of City Barbecue in Gahanna, just a five-minute drive from the Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport hotel. Having eaten at several of City Barbecue's Columbus locations over the years, I recommend it highly if you're looking for a place to dine Thursday evening or Saturday afternoon.

The menu includes all the traditional regional barbecue pork and beef sandwiches, plus St. Louis-style ribs (full and half slab), Amish fried chicken and a wide choice of side dishes and desserts. I will have copies of the full dine-in/carryout menu at the H.A.S. registration table, along with driving directions.

MEMBERSHIP

Reinstated members — *welcome back!*

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The birth of Newsboy

(Continued from Page 3)

was the dream of Forrest Campbell of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Ken Butler of Mendota, Illinois. I remembered that together they launched an effort they called the Horatio Alger Newsboy Club. However, I didn't really appreciate that their prime tool to implement the club was a newsletter. They hoped it would be a prime vehicle to bring together as many people possible who had an interest in collecting musty old Alger books. Forrest and Ken enjoyed reading and collecting these old books and knew there must be others around who felt the same. Forrest, who up to the time he met Ken, had essentially collected Alger books alone. Finding another person with a similar interest sparked the idea between them to establish a club tying members together with a newsletter that shared names, addresses and information about their collecting interests.

Forrest then picked up the ball and in July 1962 produced a one-page newsletter (8½ x 14 inches) called "The Newsboy," Volume 1, Number 1 and sent it to as many people he and Ken knew who they thought might be interested. The second issue was produced the very next month and carried a plain masthead titled "The Horatio Alger Newsboy Club," Volume 1, Number 2

From that humble beginning, a **Newsboy** publication has been produced and sent to members of the Horatio Alger Newsboy Club (now the Horatio Alger Society) continually for 53 years! That is over five decades of sharing Alger information among hundreds of members. The extent of the hard work spent by so many dedicated people for so long should not be minimized. Think about that the next time you open your copy of **Newsboy** and appreciate what members of our organization have achieved.

Why bring all this up now, you ask, and what prompted interest in activities occurring these past 50 years? Well, it was a recent email I received from Bob Eastlack (PF-557) who sparked it all. He asked if I had any copies of the old, legal-size **Newsboys** published in the early 1960s. He is working with members James Keeline, Gene Bartlett, Bob Huber and others to get all 53 years of **Newsboys** scanned for the Society's website so they will be available online



Forrest Campbell

to everyone. Eastlack said the issues needed were among those produced during the first six years. These were essentially Forrest's creations that were 8½ x 14 inches in size, hand typed on stencil and mimeographed. Bob remembered that over the years I had collected **Newsboys** and wondered if I had any from the first few years. After digging around it turns out I have a complete set of the older **Newsboys** published from the very first one in July 1962 to May 1968 when the publication was changed to the smaller 8½ x 11-inch format.

As I was sorting through these early **Newsboys**, I began to glance at their content. I was particularly impressed with Forrest's effort as he labored to develop an acceptable vehicle to share hobby information among people who were basically strangers, except for the common interest in Horatio Alger, Jr. He must have spent considerable time pondering the question: how does one start a hobby club from scratch and develop an appealing newsletter to attract members? Not an easy task in 1962, or any year, I suspect, but one Forrest readily accepted, non-withstanding the fact that he had a full-time job as a mail carrier, an active family with kids and grandkids and, I gather, not unlimited funds to spend on such a project.

I never met Forrest Campbell; we corresponded, but we never ended up at the same place at the same time. He, of course, is one of the founders of our Society; Ken Butler is the other. I did meet and spend time with Ken at my first Alger convention in New Philadelphia, Ohio, in 1974 and several times afterward. He and his wife were very pleasant and enthusiastic Alger people; they and others at the Canton gathering were a major influence that hooked me on Alger forever. It is interesting for me now to go back to the very early days of the Society to see how these two men doggedly worked to organize themselves and others into a viable and popular long-term relationship.

In the development of any organization the first year is critical to its success. So I thought it might be fun and interesting to do a brief analysis of the first 12 issues (Volume 1) of **Newsboy**. So I read each of them in detail in an attempt to capture the key events and people active at that time. So come along with me now as I highlight people and actions occurring during the very first year of our "Newsboy Club." I believe these early experiences massaged and conditioned by time and the actions of many sincere and interested folk, set the foundation of what we have today with our newsletter and as a Society.

Newsboy, The first 12 issues

When one reads the initial 12 issues he can't help but be struck by the sheet size (8½ x 14 inches), paper colors (various) and the amount of text per page. These

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The birth of Newsboy

(Continued from Page 5)

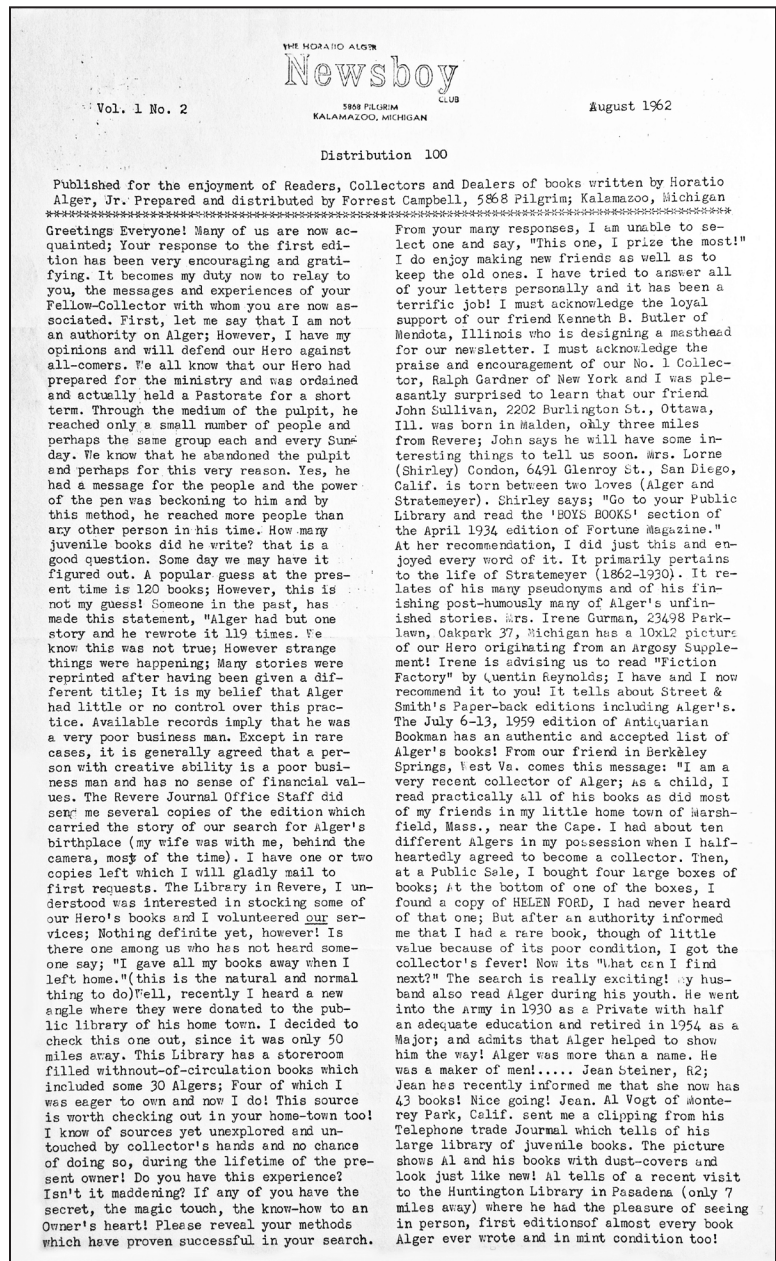
legal-size sheets of paper display text in two very wide columns with each column essentially one long paragraph. However, the text content was chummy, informative and a friendly presentation that kept one's attention throughout. Forrest, the writer, squeezed words from side to side and top to bottom. He had a lot he wanted to say and being a postman knew that the fewer sheets he used, the less the cost each would be to mail. Initially he insisted on funding the entire cost of its production and mailing himself!

However, after the seventh issue he reluctantly accepted subscriber donations of \$2.00 per issue. All along, he insisted there would be no paid advertising, as he didn't want to "run a business" or become "commercial," as he wrote at one point. It is very clear that he accepted full responsibility for the production and content of the initial newsletters and saw them as a key way to bring people together.

The very first issue is one sheet of large paper (my copy is a gold color) with the text on one side in two long and very wide columns. The words at the top are: "THE NEWSBOY, FIRST EDITION, JULY 1962, VOL. 1 NO. 1" and gives Forrest's name and address as the person responsible for its preparation and distribution. The heading also notes that it is primarily "published in the interest of readers, collectors and dealers of books written by Alger."

Up front identification seemed to be important to Forrest, as he wanted to set a friendly tone and get to know everybody he interacted with as best he could. The number of First Edition copies (Volume 1 Number 1) initially produced is not printed on the sheet; however, Forrest notes later that it was sent to 75 people who were known to be interested in Alger. He made 100 copies of a second printing which I do not have. However, I do have a third printing (Souvenir Edition) on which it is noted that 250 copies were made. Apparently these printings of the First Edition were produced and given to anyone who might be interested in getting on his mailing list. Forrest obviously was very proud of the first-edition issue

So, in the first **Newsboy** Campbell described who he was, what he collected and included items about his own personal life and special interests. He encouraged his readers to do the same so everybody would get to



The second newsletter in August 1962 added "The Horatio Alger Newsboy Club" rubber-stamped at the top of the page.

know each other well, like a family. He also recounted his recent visit to Alger's birthplace in Massachusetts. The purpose of that trip was to visit as many locations important in Alger's early life as he could find. He writes about that trip: "I had honored our Hero according to my ability having visited his place of beginning and ending. What went on in between will be discussed and disputed for ages to come."


That ended the column and certainly set the tone for **Newsboy**, and "The Newsboy Club" ever since. Month after month he shared the responses he received from

THE HORATIO ALGER

Vol. 1 No. 4
Distribution 400

October 1962

A Newsletter



Newsboy

CLUB

5868 PILGRIM KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed at the expense of Forrest Campbell, Id.

Greetings! Members and Friends! to our new Readers, Welcome! 100 of you have been added since the last edition! Our business is to bring together through the medium of this newsletter all people interested in any way, in Horatio Alger, Our Hero!

Our project to stock the Public Library in Revere, Mass. The birthplace of our hero, must be reviewed for the benefit of our new Readers. The Librarian, Mrs. Mildred Stowell, has given us the green light and will keep the donated books under or behind glass enclosures where they will be preserved and protected from handling. Locations should be made in the name of our Club and mailed from your home; but first check with me before mailing so that no books will be duplicated. Books donated thus far are as follows:

- 1-Risen from the ranks - Forrest Campbell
- 2-The Erie Train Boy - Kenneth B. Butler
- 3-Jeck's Yard - George Setman, III
- 4-Strong and Steady - George Setman, III
- 5-The Young Outlaw - George Setman, III

To conserve space, these will not be listed again. Please save this record. The next reference will begin with item #6.

Items in the local news of national interest: Kalamazoo; Our oldest citizen, William (Dad) Edgington, age 113 has just recently passed on to his eternal reward. Dad has been the public eye here for the past 13 years and we are proud of the record he has attained! Kalamazoo: Two Discount Stores here end Sunday openings! Topps and Spartan Department Stores are cooperating with public demands. These two stores are a part of a national chain and are new to our Community. Kalamazoo; Storm Dismissal Creates New Problems at Public Schools; The local Board of Education has learned something from the recent dismissal due to threatening storm reports authorized by official Weather Bureau personnel. All children were dismissed and sent home and it was discovered that there were no school crossing guards on duty at this unscheduled hour. Students accustomed to school bus transportation were turned loose on our city streets. Children unexpected at home, found locked doors and no parent to protect them. School officials feel that the parents should have the custody of the children during emergencies. Does your Community have a school dismissal program in event of emergencies?

Some of our Readers have been asking for a list of rare books which collectors are looking for, and it might be well to list the 15 books that Ken Butler claims hard to find; They are as follows:

PLEASE TURN TO SECTION 2

PLEASE TURN TO SECTION B

For the fourth issue (October 1962), Forrest Campbell introduced the "running newsboy" illustration still used today.

readers so they could interact with him and with each other. That must have resonated with many fellow collectors, because by December 1962 (just five months after the first newsletter was issued), he distributed 415 newsletters and the number of paid subscribers had grown to 45.

Forrest tried hard to personalize information that he thought would be of general interest to the group as well. For example, Gil Westgard (PF-024) still one of our current long-standing members, joined the club when he was 20 years of age (the youngest subscriber at the time)

and showed keen interest in, and considerable knowledge about, Horatio Alger. In Gil's early correspondence, he included many items about New York City in Alger's time and provided Forrest with Alger poems he had found and other relevant historic items, much of which Forrest printed in *Newsboy*. At one point, Forrest congratulated Gilbert on becoming an Elder in the Mormon Church and wished him well on his first missionary assignment to Switzerland. Incidentally, Gilbert applied to Forrest (and got permission) to become the newsletter's foreign correspondent and as such, continued to submit relevant Alger material.

From the second *Newsboy* on, Campbell devoted the first column (left hand side) to himself, his Alger collection and related interests, as well as personal thoughts and experiences in collecting Alger. For example, he states "I'm not an Alger expert" nor "a first edition collector"; he was primarily interested in obtaining as many different Alger stories as he could find. He always shared with readers his most recent "find," excitedly giving details about how it came about. The right-hand column he devoted to commenting and answering responses he had received from readers, and detailing particulars about new members. This seemed to be a major emphasis of his interest in writing and sending out the newsletter. His clear intention was to locate and interact with people and offer his newsletter as a source of information to everyone about collecting Alger and offering it as a vehicle to let readers interact. He felt in this way his readership could exchange want lists and information among themselves, subsequently enhancing their own collections, Alger and/or otherwise.

After the first newsletter, Forrest placed these words at the top as a heading: "The Horatio Alger Newsboy Club," along with the Volume, Number, date, distribution quantity and the following statement: "Published for the enjoyment of Readers, Collectors and Dealers of books written by Horatio Alger, Jr. Prepared and distributed by Forrest Campbell, 5868 Pilgrim, Kalamazoo, Michigan"

Reading through these early *Newsboys*, I get the distinct impression that antique dealers were a large part of the readership. At different times, Forrest would tell about all the items readers had told him they collected besides Alger. For example, Stratemeyer, Zane Grey, Burroughs, Reid, Optic and other similar authors were searched for,

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The birth of Newsboy

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as well as items such as guns, paper weights, old toys, potato mashers, coins, antique political pins, Victrolas and records, Danish Christmas plates, sea shells, bottles, penny banks etc. At one point Forrest said he had collected old telephone directories for many years. In exposing people's interests he clearly had a goal for his readership to exchange items among themselves. This is why I think he spent half of the newsletter detailing interests of readers and providing specific names and addresses. Ed Mattson (PF-067), then a member (and still is), suggested early on a "swappers" column that I think encouraged Forrest to continue to make the newsletter available to readers for bartering among themselves.

Beginning with the fourth issue (October, 1962) that he distributed to 400 people, Forrest placed a new masthead at the top. It shows a running newsboy (similar to a Hurst cover image) carrying newspapers, which he placed between the words: "The Horatio Alger Newsboy Club" (all in blue). Ken Butler, who owned a printing business in Mendota, Illinois, designed the heading. This "running newsboy" image has been part of the **Newsboy** masthead ever since.

Incidentally, information gleaned from these first **Newsboys** reveals that Ken, besides supporting Forrest, was also a huge antique car collector and attended car meets all over the northeast. A few years later, when I got to know Ken, he still maintained his cars as well as a large collection of other antiques in a very impressive museum in Mendota that was visited by many attendees to the 1976 annual convention in Rosemont, just outside of Chicago.

As time went on, Forrest Campbell narrowed the columns in the newsletter and, with the sixth issue (December 1962), kept the number of legal-size sheets to a consistent three. Essentially, there seemed to be four areas of emphasis in newsletter content that were settling into place:

1. Forrest's hobby experiences and activities.
2. Forrest's responses to, and items about, club members.
3. New information and/or research about Alger and Alger collecting.
4. The inclusion of several longer Alger-oriented articles presented in installments.

In the first 12 newsletters there were three of these latter articles that I found fascinating. One was a thoughtful paper in four installments (in four individual **Newsboys**) by Professor John Cawelti (Wisconsin) about how Alger, the writer, was transformed into a contemporary symbol of success and free enterprise. A second and longer article

(supplied by Gil Westgard) was by Helen Campbell, (from *Darkness and Daylight*, 1892, Chapter 4) that described the plight of street children, particularly newspaper boys, in New York City in the latter 1800s. Charles Loring Brace and the Newsboys' Lodging House were prominently discussed. Forrest included this material in six installments. A complete Alger-type story written by Forrest himself, *The Young Postmaster* was the third set of installments. He included one chapter a month as a separate sheet (text on both sides) in the newsletter for 36 months. These longer stories not only related directly to many members' interests, but readers must have looked forward eagerly to receiving the next installment.

Forrest wrote *The Young Postmaster* as an evolving typical Alger story, complete with the nasty squire and overbearing son, the Hero and his siblings, the Hero's mother and so on. It was inserted first in the January 1963 issue. In several prior issues Forrest offered the readers of **Newsboy** an opportunity to name all the characters except the mean old squire whose name he reserved for his own (Campbell). He wanted to be sure none "of his readers would take offense."

Readers participated, offering names that Forrest accepted, they set the time (1900) and they named the town in which the story took place (Algerton). The story was a shared experience with his readers who would also own the copyright that Forrest had applied for. He wrote the story as time went along and each month he reported any reactions he had received from readers. He then hinted — cliff-hanging fashion — about the next events that would unfold in the following month's installment. I understand he published this story in book form but do not have a copy. I do have one of Forrest's books, titled *The Boy From The Bowery/Gran'ther Baldwin's Clock*; he had it bound in book form with a 1980 copyright date. The former is a play (1967) and latter is a short story (1979).

Forrest continued to prepare and distribute the early issues of **Newsboy** at his own expense as he viewed it as purely a hobby and a way to interact with other Alger collectors. He doggedly refused to accept commercial advertising and only reluctantly accepted a subscriber fee beginning with the October 1962 **Newsboy**. Asked at one point how he could afford the expense of this hobby, he replied: "I quit smoking on February 8th." At one point he accepted an offer by subscriber Irene Gurman from Michigan to help with some of the editing chores. For four months as Associate Editor she produced an interesting full page of text she titled, "From the Alger Foxhole," Then, due to time constraints, she had to resign; Forrest carried the ball alone after that with the help of reader-provided articles.

The name George L. Setman is of interest in the development of Forrest and Ken's growing club. Mr. Setman

(Quakertown, Pa.) contacted Forrest (September, 1962 issue) and told him he had also formed, and was Secretary of, a Horatio Alger club there in Pennsylvania that had several members, but they did not have a newsletter. Forrest welcomed Setman and his group and gladly arranged to send **Newsboy** to them. Eventually the Setman members were absorbed into Forrest's club, I gather, because they enjoyed **Newsboy** and the relationships that had developed with Forrest and his membership.

I found a curious item in reviewing these first newsletters that occurred in Numbers 3 and 4 (September & October 1962). At some point Forrest apparently thought it would be a good idea to start the columns on the first page and then continue each to the second page, the third etc. The column on the left of the page for several pages is labeled Section 1, 2, 3 or 4 depending upon the page and the columns on the right side are labeled Sections A, B, C or D. Neither of the two columns wrapped on the same page. As I read these early issues I found the text was very hard to follow. I assume others did as well, because the text was wrapped on the same page starting with the November 1962 issue.

I was surprised to learn from these initial newsletters that Forrest established several continuing club projects that he dutifully reported upon each month. The first was arranged during his visit to Revere, Mass., in 1962. He had visited the Revere library and found they had few Alger books in their collection, so he made arrangements with the head librarian for members of his club to voluntarily donate Alger books to the library in the name of The Horatio Alger Newsboy Club. Each month he reported in the newsletter who had donated books and how many had been sent to the library up to that point. I gathered this project was a minimal success, at least this first year, judging from the reports given.

A second project he started in the club's name early this first year was a savings account at a local Kalamazoo bank he labeled The Ragged Dick Fund. His idea was to ask club members to donate directly to the fund and, after \$50 had accumulated, it would be used to help a deserving boy (and/or his family) judged to be an Alger Hero type who was in need of assistance. During the first year the fund had not reached the \$50 figure; however, it continued to be maintained. As I recall, the first recipient from the fund was the son of police officer J. D. Tippit, who was killed in Dallas the day of the Kennedy assassination in November 1963.

A third continuing project was a film library that Forrest maintained containing film of interesting Alger sites, as well as the recording of his visits with various members as he and his wife traveled. I gather he spent most of his free time visiting and filming people in various states, getting to know them and their Alger interests better. He continued

to share the results of these visits in **Newsboy**.

During this first year of **Newsboy**, I found members had started to address questions about Alger's life and works. These questions may seem elementary to us today, but 50 years ago they were big issues within his readership. Answers came from readers of the newsletter, who through independent research shared what they had learned or knew. Often other members added to what was being learned depending upon the subject.

A good example of this was when members questioned how many Alger titles there were and how many actual, different stories Alger wrote. Someone discovered an article Morton Enslin of New York had written in **Antiquarian Bookman** (July 6-13, 1959) that listed Alger titles. Then, in response to this question, Westgard started a project whereby he developed an index of the first lines of all Alger stories to determine which two (or more) titles had the same first line. Also raised at the time were the 11 Stratemeyer completions and whether or not they should be considered actual Alger titles. We should remember that this was well before Gardner, Bennett, Westgard, Scharnhorst, Bales and others whose research we rely upon so heavily today. It was, however, after Gruber's 1961 book (*Horatio Alger, Jr. A Biography and Bibliography of the Best Selling Author of All Time*) that apparently they had not discovered yet (December 1963). What these early readers were saying was that there was a lot about Alger collecting they just didn't know and were eager to discover. To a lesser degree, I think that is still the case today.

Another question those early members wrestled with was the apparent confusion about a valid birth year of Alger. Was it 1834 as was used by some "authorities" or was it 1832 as several members insisted? In the June 1963 issue, subscriber and future H.A.S. President Max Goldberg of Massachusetts, who coined the term "Algerphiles" as a label for new Alger fans, offered several items of proof substantiating the 1832 year, including birth documentation from the Chelsea vital records office. This validated the 1832 date and work then began by members to correct mistakes appearing in some leading biographical sources. It is interesting to me when looking ahead several years in later **Newsboys** (to April 1966), that I found a reprinted letter from Andrew Fisher of the *World Almanac* who, in response to a letter from Ralph Gardner, agreed their publication will change Alger's birth date from 1834 to January 13, 1832 in the future. Soon other "authoritative" references made similar changes.

Some other discoveries found during this first year of **Newsboy** included: a picture of Alger that was found in a supplement of **Argosy** magazine, an obituary of Alger, a suggestion of a way to trade or swap Alger books by assigning a different number of units to each publisher

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The birth of Newsboy

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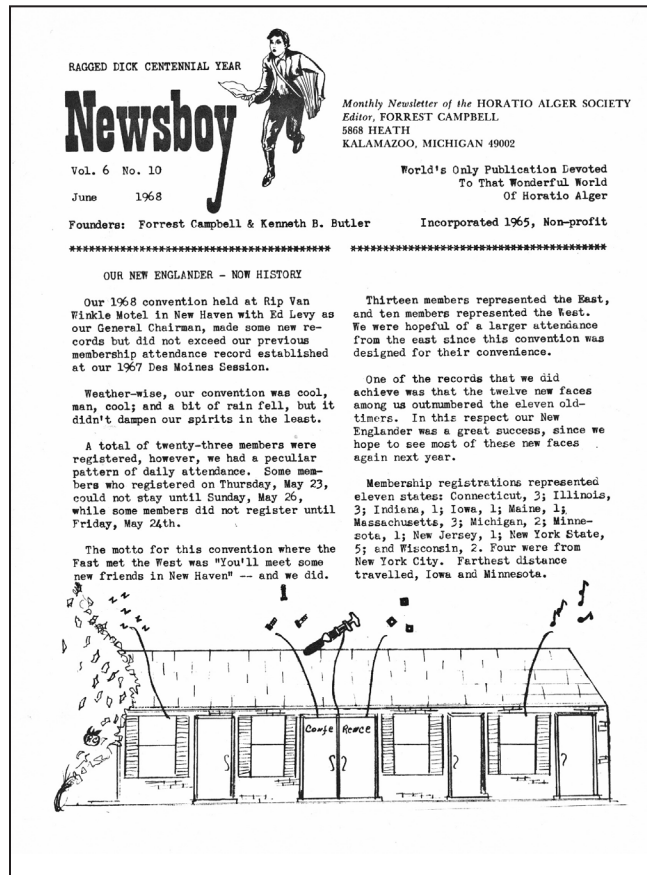
(first editions having the most units), five reference books that describe New York City in Alger's time, a list of Stratemeyer completions, a review of Madeleine Stern's *Imprints of History*, containing a biography on A.K. Loring and a listing of two of Alger's pen names (Hamilton and Putnam). Many of these items were discussed in subsequent *Newsboys* and certainly explored in future books about Alger. It amazes me now to appreciate the amount of information about Alger that has been developed these past 50 years in either bringing to light new facts or clarifying misinformation. Some would say much of this started when a group of very interested Alger bibliophiles operating under the banner of the "Horatio Alger Newsboy Club" began and continued to zero in on setting the Horatio Alger, Jr. record straight.

So, from the first 12 issues of *Newsboy* we can begin to understand some of the principles that have become important in the development of our organization. Principles such as building friendships based upon common interests, conducting research to uncover some of the mysteries of the past and in readily sharing such research to better gain new insights about Horatio Alger and his works.

These efforts grew and were only to intensify in the next few years. For example, in 1964, the "Club" welcomed both Ralph Gardner's book about Alger and his works (*Horatio Alger, Jr.; or, The American Hero Era*), as well as Gil Westgard's book of Alger poetry, *Alger Street*. A year later the "club" was incorporated as The Horatio Alger Society and established a set of by-laws. These events were all reported and within the time that Forrest Campbell was issuing *Newsboy* in 8½ x 14-inch sheets. Later, other significant events such as the Mayes revelations, the Scharnhorst and Bales scholarly documentations, the NIU Repository and the Commemorative Stamp projects occurred and were all well chronicled in *Newsboy*.

However, to me, the first 12 issues Forrest Campbell created are fascinating in that they reflected not only on a time of fresh discovery about the hobby, but it was about setting a tone and a foundation for Alger collectors to become good friends as well. One gets a sense from reading these first 12 issues (soon to be posted in full on our website) that members were gaining a feeling of personal attachment and accomplishment as they got to know more about each other, about Alger and about Alger collecting.

One also gets the feeling that discovery of new things was the mode and finding more Alger collectors to share information was the passion. It was surely a time of growth,



The first issue of *Newsboy* in today's 8½ x 11-inch format was Volume 6, Number 10, in June 1968. On Page 4, Forrest Campbell stated, "Due to increased printing costs, but also to improve the quality of our publication, we have adopted an entirely new format with this issue. We hope you will like it."

exploration and the building of a camaraderie that still exists in our Society today, some five-plus decades later. We should be very thankful for that legacy.

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Jack Bechdolt and the Barrow Brothers Series

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

He certainly did not suffer the accursed writer's block. The words flew from Jack Bechdolt's typewriter like a thunderstorm roaring across the Great Plains. He wrote books on just about every subject, fiction and non-fiction. He is credited with at least 5,000 short stories, most of them written during a long career as one of Frank A. Munsey's free-lance writers for his various *Argosy* publications.

It's interesting that of his large number of books, several dozen, only five were packaged into a series for boys — the Barrow Brothers Series — all published by Cosmopolitan Book Corporation in a single year, 1931. Both the series and *Cosmopolitan* felt the wrath of the Great Depression as the books did not sell well, and *Cosmopolitan* was that year bought out by Farrar & Rinehart. But the Barrow Brothers books are much better than their relatively short sales life would seem to indicate. They are adventure stories of the highest order, with such locales as the frozen Arctic, the blasting heat of Baja California and the oppressing humidity of the insect-infested Amazon River jungle.

But before delving into the adventures of Bob and Paul Barrow, let's offer some background on Jack Bechdolt and glimpse at the wide-ranging topics covered in his books.

He was born John Ernest Bechdolt on July 13, 1884, in Mankato, Minnesota, the youngest offspring of Adolph Frederick and Jean Ritchie Bechdolt. By the time young Jack had reached 16, the family had moved to Seattle, where his father taught at the state university. (Incidentally, Seattle is the "home base" for many of the Barrow Brothers' adventures).

Jack Bechdolt was not alone in being born with the writer's genes. His older brother Frederick R. Bechdolt (1873-1950) authored numerous novels in the western and adventure genres. Jack also had two older sisters, Matilda, born in 1876, and Margaret (1878).

In addition to his dime novel and serial writing for Frank Munsey, Jack Bechdolt worked for newspapers in Seattle and Kansas City, bragging that his time with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in the 1906-16 period "was B.H. (before Hearst)." He was married twice, first to Mabel Claire (Glasier) of Aberdeen, Washington, herself



All five volumes of the Barrow Brothers Series were published by Cosmopolitan Book Corp. in 1931.

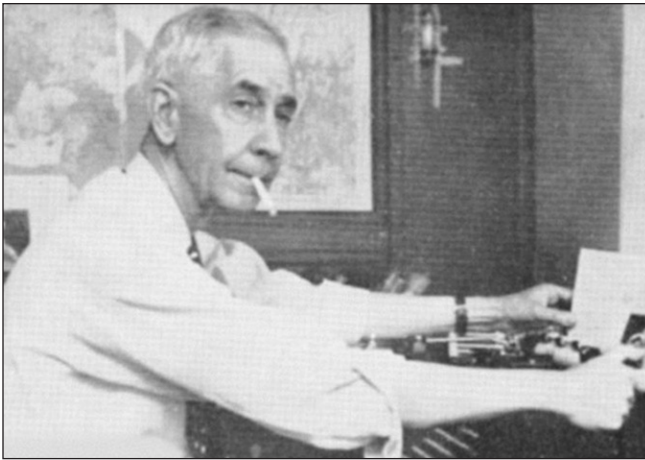
a prominent writer on women's issues, along with being a successful sculptor and watercolorist. However, she died at age 43 in New York City.

Bechdolt's second wife, Decie Merwin, was also a well-known artist and writer. In fact, during the final two decades of Bechdolt's life, they collaborated on numerous books for young children (usually for publisher E.P. Dutton), with Jack doing the writing and Decie the illustrations. Prominent among them were the "Dulcie" series of short-story collections, such as *Dulcie; or, Half a Yard of Linsey Woolsey* (1943), *Dulcie and the Monkey* (1944) and *Dulcie and the Gypsies* (1948). Each runs about 70 to 75 pages. Perhaps Jack's and Decie's most well-known children's book during this period was *Trusty: The Story of a Police Horse* (1947). Another book by the husband-wife collaborators is *Bandmaster's Holiday*, published in 1938 by the Oxford University Press.

Still in print today is the book for which Bechdolt is probably best known: the Little Golden Book *Little Boy with a Big Horn* (Simon & Schuster, 1950). In it, the boy hero, Ollie, is learning to play a bass tuba, but just about everybody among his family and friends are annoyed by the noise produced by his practicing this loud and cumbersome instrument. To get away from his critics,

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This article was presented as a paper on April 16, 2014, at the 44th annual joint conference of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association in Chicago, and at the 2014 Horatio Alger Society convention in Annapolis, Maryland.



Jack Bechdolt, shown at his typewriter in his mid-sixties, had a career spanning more than 40 years, including newspapers, dime novels and fiction and nonfiction books for young people and adults.

Barrow Brothers Series

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Ollie decides to go practice alone near the entrance to the town's harbor. Lo and behold, a heavy fog rolls in, and his horn becomes a *de facto* foghorn, saving a ship from being wrecked on the rocks. Ollie thus becomes the town's hero.

For those interested in bibliographic details, Western Printing and Lithographing Company in Racine, Wisconsin, in early years was Simon and Schuster's partner in producing the Little Golden Books. Western did the actual printing and binding until 1958, when Simon and Schuster sold its interest in the Little Golden Books to Western.

Right up there in popularity among Bechdolt's stories for a more adult readership was *The Torch*, published in book form in 1948 by Prime Press of Philadelphia. This was a reprint of a serial of the same title Bechdolt had written for Bob Simpson, one of Frank Munsey's chief editors at **The Argosy**. Although Bechdolt wrote mostly short stories in the 1920s for the **Argosy All-Story Weekly**, this was his first multi-chapter serial.

"I still think *The Torch* is a good yarn," Bechdolt says in the author's profile on the dust jacket. "I am glad to see it published before the pulp paper pages of old **Argosy** dissolve into dust. Since *The Torch* was written, men have found ways to kill each other a million times more horrible and fantastic than the author dreamed of. If any present day reader is reminder by this story of civilization in ruins, of the more fantastical and dangerous world we are now living in, I wish it will make him do a little serious thinking."

The plot of *The Torch* describes the near-destruction of the world's society by a cosmic encounter with a comet, "nuclear fission induced by a disrupted solar system had laid waste like some great plague, crumbling its strongest towers, destroying by fire and earthquake millions of homes and millions of lives."

Mankind is driven underground in order to survive, and the ray of hope for civilization is cast by the still-shining torch from the wrecked Statue of Liberty. The story has plot points reminiscent of Pierre Bouille's *Planet of the Apes*.

While *The Torch* was a reissue of a story written decades earlier, Bechdolt continued to write regularly until shortly before his death from heart failure on December 28, 1954, in Pinebluff, North Carolina.

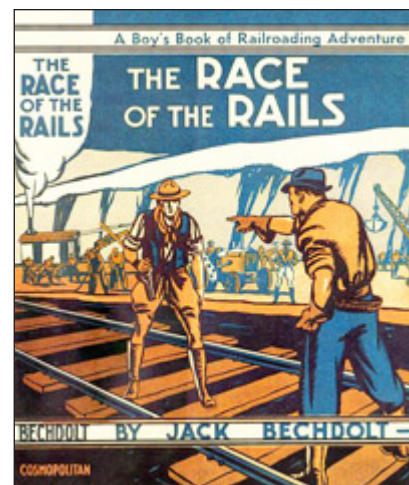
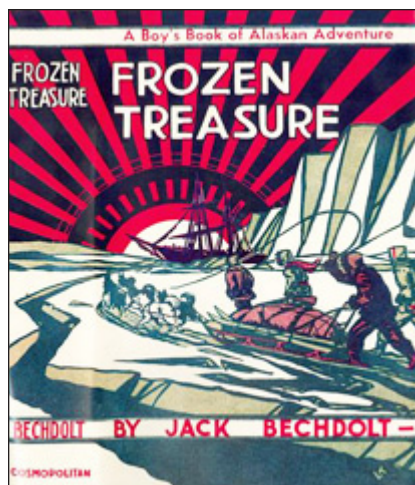
Among his later children's books was *On the Air: A Story of Television* (E.P. Dutton, 1950), in which youngsters Paul Oakley and siblings Frank and Cassie Sommers attempt a career on dance shows broadcast in the then-new medium of television, with Paul and Cassie eventually falling in love. Thus, the young couple (Paul, a struggling pianist, and Cassie, a department store clerk) find an exciting career in the pioneer TV industry, along with romance.

A year prior to *On the Air*, Bechdolt wrote a boys' story titled *Greg Sheridan, Reporter* (E.P. Dutton, 1949), which harkens back to the author's days as a newspaperman. In this story, young Greg moves from Minnesota to the Long Island suburbs of New York City, where he takes a newspaper job, finding mystery and romance go hand in hand with reporting the news.

In the non-fiction field, Bechdolt is best known for *The Modern Handy Book for Boys*, still available in print-on-demand editions. First published by Greenberg in 1933, the book's seven main sections cover Outdoor Adventures, Outdoor Amusements, Indoor Amusements,



Little Boy With a Big Horn, a 1950 Little Golden Book still popular today, is Bechdolt's most well-known book, staying in print for more than 60 years.



The attractive dust jackets for the Barrow Brothers Series were drawn in the art deco style of the 1930s.

The Movies, Show Business, Art and Craftsmanship and Magic. These are broken down into 38 chapters covering 421 pages, with hand-drawn illustrations of various activities and projects.

Speaking of movies, Bechdolt was on the cutting-floor edge with his *How to Make Your Own Motion Picture Plays, Including 12 Scenarios for Amateur Actors*. Published by Greenberg in 1926, the book covers techniques of film-making during the final years of the silent era.

The Barrow Brothers Series

Now, on to the main subject of this article. Because the Barrow Brothers Series books all came out in 1931, there is some confusion as to the sequence of the stories, complicated by the fact that the copyright registration numbers are out of sequence, placing the second title, *Hidden Waters*, with a lower number than the first, *Frozen Treasure*, despite the fact that the order is the opposite, both from a plot standpoint and the fact that the promotional blurb on the dust jacket for *Hidden Waters* begins as follows: "In this second of the Barrow Brothers Series ..."

The Race of the Rails is properly placed as the third of the five books. The fourth and fifth titles, *The Lost Vikings* and *Jungle Diamonds*, again clash with the copyright registration numbers, with *Jungle Diamonds* at 31-31122 and *The Lost Vikings* at 31-31128. This is probably due to the timing of the sale of Cosmopolitan to Farrar & Rinehart. Researcher Bart Nyberg suspects the final two volumes' sheets and covers were produced by Cosmopolitan and then turned over to Farrar & Rinehart for binding.

"I doubt we will ever really know for sure, unless company correspondence turns up somewhere," says Nyberg. "The 1931 CBI has a note under Farrar & Rinehart stating they purchased the Cosmopolitan Company during 1931, no specifics given."

However, after reading the five books, the story arc of the series flows more logically with *The Lost Vikings*

as the fourth title and *Jungle Diamonds* the fifth and concluding title. Other readers may feel more comfortable with *The Lost Vikings* as the finale. Take your choice; the sequence works well either way.

Frozen Treasure

The opening book in the series introduces — quite logically — the main characters, though in an unusual fashion. For Bob Barrow in Chapter 1, "Outcasts of the Arctic," the story introduces him in flashback as he is barely walking-age, and younger brother Paul Barrow is still an infant. They are the children of Captain Amos Barrow of the trading schooner "Borealis," and his wife Hilda, who are marooned after the their ship, along with several others, become trapped in frozen Arctic ice. The children eventually make it back to civilization, though their father does not.

Flashing ahead to contemporary times, and Bob and Paul are now ages 18 and 15, respectively. The main plot of *Frozen Treasure* involves Bob and Paul, along with their surrogate father, Captain Sam Martin, along with the boys' young Eskimo companion, the 15-year-old Ooganik (his soon-to-be full westernized name, John James Ooganik). This hardy bunch decides to trek back to the ice-locked "Borealis" in an attempt to retrieve and take to market the valuable cargo of hundreds of bundles of furs still stashed in the ship's hold.

The young heroes must battle the elements, along with the evil surviving "Borealis" first mate, Tom Hooker, who is out to get the furs for himself. Of course, they emerge triumphant, and the resulting financial rewards are enough to ensure the Barrows' formal education.

Hidden Waters

The second book of the series has the boys traveling to Baja California, this time on an adventure to find a cache of pearls. As usual, there's a bad guy, this time by

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Barrow Brothers Series

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the name Gordon Cannon, who wants the treasure for himself. When Captain Sam Martin (in the book's opening pages) sends a telegram from Ensenada, Mexico to Seattle, requesting the Barrow Boys to travel as soon as possible to join him, Cannon intercepts the telegram before it is sent, re-writing it to tell the boys to stay home, thus leaving Martin as his lone rival in the search.

The adventure heats up (literally) under the hot Mexican sun, when the Barrow Boys, along with their Eskimo pal Ooganik, still manage to get to Baja California when it is feared the Captain is in trouble. They soon meet up with a mysterious sixtyish Connecticut woman, Mrs. Miles Cabot Butterfield, whose interest in the pearls is of a highly personal nature. They soon learn from a Mexican native of the dangers of desert travel. He tells them of a place called *Agua Escondida*, where fresh water flows inside a hidden niche in a canyon wall — thus the book's title.

Of course, the quest for the treasure is filled with cliff-hanging adventure, but our heroes win out at the end, and the pearls help Mrs. Butterfield, save her ancestral family home in Connecticut from foreclosure.

The Race of the Rails

The third volume of the series involves the building of side-by-side rival railroads through the Alaskan wilderness in order to be the first to lay claim to a mountain lode of copper ore in the northern reaches of the territory. The trick is that both lines much pass through the Chugach Pass, though there's only room for one set of rails. So, whichever line gets there first can lay claim to the pass and thus the clear right-of-way to the copper fields.

The railroad company backed by the Barrows is the Chatna and Northern, run by the Aiken brothers. The rival line, led by engineer Jim Bass, is the Manuska and Copper Mountain. And it's apparent the latter will go to any means to win the "Race of the Rails."

In this story, Bechdolt makes an interesting twist. We soon learn that Ooganik must return to his native Arctic tribe because after living with the Barrows in Seattle for a time, the warm climate brought on by the Japan Current is adversely affecting his health. Then, Captain Martin and Bob Barrow are off to New York for an extended stay in an effort to secure financial backing for the Chatna and Northern Railroad.

That leaves it up to younger brother Paul Barrow, now described as "almost sixteen," to be the book's main protagonist. We don't hear from Bob and the Captain again until the very end of the story.

A major plot element involves the steamship "Coro-

nado," supposedly hired to carry construction equipment and rolling stock for the Chatna and Northern. Instead, the "Coronado" is a rusted-out "ghost ship" with a strange captain and crew that has been hired by the rival railroad to enter the narrow channel leading to Chatna, the railroad's Alaska entry port, and then be sunk intentionally to block the channel. The ship contains no supplies, only ballast rock to make it sink quickly once an explosive charge has been triggered.

Paul is refused a ride aboard the ship by the drunken Captain Strong, but he stows away, is caught and put off in a boat, but then returns and again becomes a stowaway. The book's chapters during which Paul foils the plot and in fact runs the "Coronado" onto the rocks in a place not blocking the important channel, contains several of the finest action sequences in the entire Barrow Brothers Series.

Another cliff-hanger involves the Chatna and Northern's nearly finished trestle across a gorge just outside the Chugach Pass. The rival Manuska and Copper Mountain Railroad has placed a dynamite charge, and Paul arrives just in time to toss the explosive over the side.

Then, we learn that this so-called "great rivalry" is not so great after all. Jim Bass, head of the Manuska and Copper Mountain, has a beautiful daughter named Judy, and it's apparent upon first meeting that she and Paul Barrow "have a thing" for each other. Her father recognizes this and notices that the strapping blond-haired Paul is a true All-American boy. So when his railroad's race for the Chugach Pass is foiled, Bass says:

"It was a good fight, even if I lost it," he said, and smiled at Paul. "Remember I prophesied that someday we'd forget and be friends? I hope that day has come?"

"I hope so, too," Paul agreed, earnestly. Judy was looking at him with interest.

The Lost Vikings

Bechdolt really hit his stride in writing *The Lost Vikings*. In many respects it is the most exciting adventure encountered by the Barrow Brothers and their adoptive father, Captain Martin, along with the boys' close Eskimo friend, Ooganik, who rejoins them following his hiatus during *The Race of the Rails*. That's logical, since *The Lost Vikings* marks a return to the Ooganik's native Arctic region for the first time since the opening story in the series, *Frozen Treasure*.

In this story, the Silver Fox Trading Company, co-owned by Captain Martin and the two Barrow brothers, decides to activate its long-idle schooner "Polar Lass" for a trip to the Greenland Glacier to find a tribe of native Eskimos. The quest was to find out the origin of what appears to be an old steel-horned Norsemen's helmet, which had come into the possession of local Seattle college professor of archaeology, William Ashley. The

helmet, darkened by rust and soot-stained with age, had the look of being truly vintage, not a reproduction.

The trip seems to begin well enough, until Bob Barrow decides to scout the territory in advance by flying the group's Fairchild pontoon plane, which had been carried aboard the ship. However, he soon encounters a storm and crash-lands onto the ice.

The adventure intensifies, as Bob is presumed lost, with the rest of the group organizing a search that turns up nothing. They encounter a tribe of Eskimos of apparent Chinese heritage, called the Uvugmiut, one member of which is a suspicious, Gollum-like character, Koodllook, the tribe's official shaman, who sneeringly uses his supposed magic powers to visualize Bob Barrow as being deceased.

Meanwhile, Bob (who's not dead, of course), stumbles upon a lost colony of Vikings of Stone-Age ancestry. They have survived in the Arctic because they live in a verdant hidden valley made temperate by hot springs and geysers.

But these "lost Vikings" are a deeply religious people living by the tenets of the Norse god Odin, and who do not want the outside world to know of their existence. As a result, any stranger happening upon their colony was forbidden to leave, at the cost of instant execution.

The Barrow brothers and Ooganik eventually reunite, but are soon interned by the Vikings, apparently doomed to remain in captivity forever. But the story takes some very strange turns, including Koodllook's assassination of the Viking leader, Erik Red Beard, with a spear. That results in his teen-aged son, Einar, inheriting the throne as the new jarl, guardian of his people's stone-age traditions. Einar soon avenges his father's death by slaying the shaman Koodllook.

So, it appears the visitors are doomed, until Einar (who had just announced their impending deaths) concocts an amazing "magical" way for the captives to escape the valley while keeping his integrity among his Norse brethren intact. Usually in boys' adventures of this kind, the conclusion is telegraphed pages, and even chapters, in advance. However, Bechdolt keeps his readers on edge all the way.

Jungle Diamonds

This time, Bechdolt sets his tale in the Amazon jungle, near the border of Brazil and Colombia. Again, as in *The Race of the Rails*, it becomes Paul Barrow's story, as Bob and old Captain Martin stay behind in Seattle, and Ooganik remains with his Arctic family. Jim Bass, the friendly railroad-building rival in that earlier book, has headed to South America in search of a field of "wash diamonds," not unlike the surface-borne conflict diamonds that in recent decades have resulted in civil war in the West African nation of Sierra Leone.

The location of the Amazon diamond field was known by Scotsman John MacDonald, a prospector of high repute, who was already in the jungle waiting to be joined by Jim Bass and his daughter Judy, along with Paul Barrow and his old friend Evergreen Banks from the *Hidden Waters* adventure in Mexican Baja California, who joins the expedition. The trip has extra meaning for Paul, who as we learned befriended Judy Bass during the previous railroading adventure.

As it turns out, Barrow and Banks miss connections in Miami with the Besses' mail plane headed south to Brazil, so they charter a Sikorsky flying boat and give chase. Soon, they are in position to rescue the Besses after

the mail plane is damaged in a rain squall and makes a forced landing in the ocean.

Following their arrival in Brazil, the adventure kicks into high gear by way of a voyage by canoe upriver, where the Barrow-Banks expedition searches for MacDonald.



But soon, they learn of the prospector's supposed death at the hands of local natives. The teller of that tale is a mysterious man named King Christophe, who lives along the river with his wife, Madam Christophe, in a decrepit, abandoned rubber plantation. Christophe is reminiscent of the reclusive up-river Colonel Kurtz in the Vietnam War film "Apocalypse Now."

To reveal more at this point would spoil this incredible tale, yet suffice to say, good triumphs over evil, and the most interesting aspect of the story is that Bechdolt never takes his readers to the actual diamond field. He feels the quest is more important than the final payoff.

So, with the diamonds supposedly in hand, the story skips ahead many days, when the Barrow-Banks group rejoins Jim and Judy Bass in the Brazil waterfront town of Manaus. Best of all, Paul Barrow is able to renew his budding romance with Judy Bass, and again, Bechdolt leaves their future to our imagination.

The **Barrow Brothers Series** is a worthy addition to the boys' book repertoire of the early 1930s. Jack Bechdolt's craftsmanship as a wordsmith is evident in nearly every chapter of the five fast-moving adventures. Why he chose to write only one boys' series, we'll never know, but we should be thankful for what he left us.

2015 convention preview:
Sightseeing in Columbus



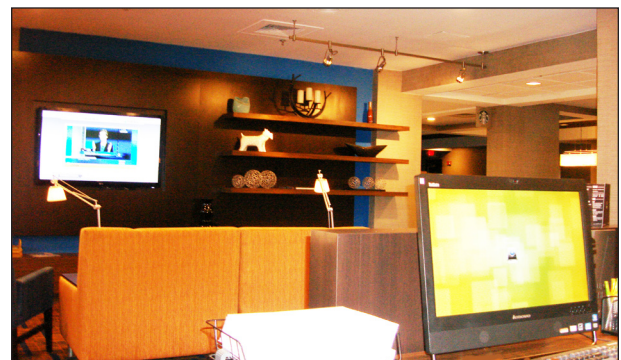
The Columbus Museum of Art, which houses an acclaimed display of late 19th and early 20th Century American and European art and sculpture.



The Ohio State University campus.



The historic Ohio Theatre, just south of the State House in downtown Columbus.



The business center and guests' lounge at the Courtyard by Marriott-Columbus Airport Hotel.

Photos by Bill Gowen