



# 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.

VOLUME LIV

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2017

NUMBER 5



**New York Weekly** issue of Oct. 5, 1871, featuring Roger Starbuck's "Upward and Onward; or, A Brave Boy's Struggles."

(See larger image on Page 6)

## Roger Starbuck's 'Upward and Onward' and Horatio Alger's 'Brave and Bold': *Surprising connections?*



**New York Weekly** issue of Aug. 5, 1872, featuring the first four chapters of Horatio Alger's "Brave and Bold; or, The Fortunes of Robert Rushton."

(See larger image on Page 8)

-- See Page 3

*Florence Kimball Russel: An author truly 'Born to the Blue'*

-- See Page 14

## President's column

Advice commonly offered to aspiring fiction writers urges them to write about what they know. One might expand that to include focusing on where as well: it makes sense to write about places you know well.

Recent reading about two major 20th century writers — James Joyce and Philip Roth — leads to the conclusion that many if not most of the characters and especially, the settings of their novels, are drawn from their real-life experiences. Joyce, for example, left Ireland in his 20s for exile on the Continent and returned only once, but never wrote about any place other than Dublin. Most of Roth's most successful fictions are set in Newark, N.J., his birthplace.

Horatio Alger began his professional writing career when he left New England for New York. Until then he had written essays and poems for college and religious publications. Now, he meant to support himself through his writing novels for boys. In the preface to *Ragged Dick*, he acknowledges his indebtedness "for some facts of which he [Alger] has been able to make use" to the Superintendent of the Newsboys' Lodging House. This institution was located, during Alger's visits and subsequent residence there, on Park Place and Fulton Street. Alger apparently also obtained source material directly from the boys staying there.

But reading these early books set in New York City discloses knowledge of city locales likely gained from Alger's own observation through walks and conduct of his daily life. In that he was living and writing in the middle of the 19th century, most of the places to which he refers are in what is today referred to as "Downtown" but in fact, what would now be seen as the downtown part of the expanded area that is now Downtown.

This is the maze of streets at the southern end of Manhattan Island, now usually defined as below 14th Street, where the 1812 grid pattern of numbered streets and avenues begins. In Alger's time, downtown was further south and usually below Canal Street. When I was first working summers and later when with a law firm, I worked in this oldest part of the city. In Alger's day, not only was the financial industry centered there but there were many living places, small businesses, hotels, restaurants, theaters, and the other places characteristic of a growing metropolis.

His hero, Richard Hunter, a.k.a. *Ragged Dick*, first

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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.*

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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](http://www.horatioalgersociety.net).

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# Roger Starbuck's 'Upward and Onward' and Horatio Alger's 'Brave and Bold': *Surprising connections?*

By Fredrik R. Stark (PF-1142)

In the *New York Weekly* of 5 October 1871, Street and Smith featured a biographical sketch, topped by a picture, of a regular contributor to their story paper. "The many admirers of Roger Starbuck's productions," state the editors, "will be pleased on beholding ... a life-like portrait of this favorite author."<sup>1</sup> They go on to say: "As our readers well know, his specialty is sea stories" (4). The front page of this issue of the *New York Weekly* [hereafter referred to as the *Weekly*] features the first installment of a serial story by Starbuck: "Upward and Onward; or, A Brave Boy's Struggles."

Interestingly, this serial marks an early departure from Starbuck's near-total devotion to nautical fiction. In style and substance, the story suggests he was quite familiar with the juvenile plot formula popularized by Horatio Alger, Jr. Below, I share details about this largely unknown serial and note its resemblance to Alger's juveniles in general. I also note a few similarities between "Upward and Onward" and Alger's "Brave and Bold: The Fortunes of Robert Rushton," which ran in the *Weekly* about a year after this Starbuck serial. Finally, I offer a brief interpretation of Street and Smith's use of author biographical sketches as promotional tools for the *Weekly*.

## Background

Roger Starbuck's real name was Augustus Comstock. Born in 1837, Comstock had intriguing ties to both seafaring and writing. His father, William, went to sea as a young man and later became a writer and editor. In 1824, his oldest uncle, Samuel, while sailing the South Pacific as a crewmember on the whaleship *Globe*, staged one of the most notorious mutinies in the history of American whaling. The gruesome details of the *Globe* mutiny, first documented in a book by William Lay and Cyrus Hussey in 1828, returned to public view in 1840 when William published *The Life of Samuel Comstock, the Terrible Whaleman*, based in part on his familiarity

*This article is derived from a paper on the dime novel nautical fiction of Roger Starbuck, presented at the 2016 conference of the Popular Culture Association at San Diego, California.*

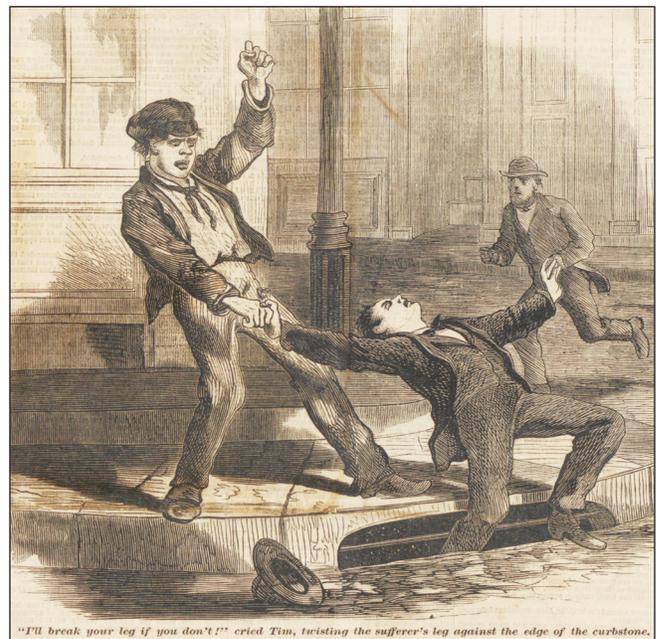


Illustration from the first page of Roger Starbuck's "Upward and Onward; or, A Brave Boy's Struggles."

with his brother Samuel's viciousness (Hoyt 201-2).<sup>2</sup> Augustus also spent a number of years at sea. When he later embarked on his literary career, he largely avoided his actual name in favor of the Nantucket-inspired pen name "Roger Starbuck."

As a 2016 recipient of the Horatio Alger Fellowship for the Study of American Popular Culture, I explored the Johannsen and LeBlanc collections at Northern Illinois University in order to document and examine originals and reprints from Starbuck's large body of popular sea adventures. Between the late 1850s and the turn of the 20th century, he turned out well over a hundred original stories on maritime themes. When reprints are taken into account, the resulting bibliography is much larger.

I became interested in Starbuck's work after noticing echoes of Melville's *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Moby-Dick* in several of his dime novels dealing with Pacific voyages.

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## Editor's notebook

Last month, as Hurricane Irma bore down on Florida as a Category 5 storm, my first thought was "Uh-oh."

The Horatio Alger Society will be holding its 2018 convention in Fort Lauderdale, just north of Miami, next May 3 through 6, and the forecasts about Irma were very discouraging. The hurricane was described as a once-in-decades potential disaster for the east coast of Florida, and after what the Houston area suffered through just a couple weeks earlier, there was cause for an event akin to Hurricane Andrew, which nearly wiped out the city of Homestead, just south of Miami, in late August 1992. Andrew, with its 175 mph winds, was one of only three Category 5 hurricanes ever to directly hit the United States.

But this time, southern Dade County got lucky, as Irma, thanks in part to its brushing along the northern coast of Cuba, was deflected to the west coast of Florida.

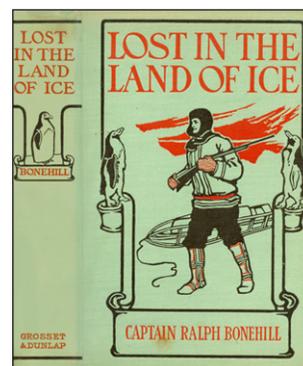
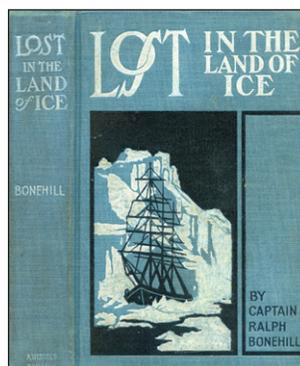
I contacted James King, our 2018 host, about how things turned out in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area, and his response is published in our "Letters to the Editor" on Page 13.

In short, the impact on Florida's east coast was much less than anticipated, and "all systems are go" (a bow to Cape Canaveral) for the convention. His letter tells the story better than I can. James will have preview material in the next three issues of *Newsboy*.

**Corrections:** A quick note about last issue's column on Jack Dizer: I got the month wrong about his 1992 presentation to the conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago. It was in February, not June. Also, I became a regular presenter at the Popular Culture Association conferences in the early 1990s, not the 1980s as I stated.

*Lost in the Land of Ice:* Also in my Dizer tribute, I mentioned that Jack presented me with a free copy of the scarce first edition of Edward Stratemeyer's *Lost in the Land of Ice*, written under his "Captain Ralph Bonehill" pseudonym. I have been asked, "What does that book look like?" so on this page is the cover of the 1902 A. Wessels Co. first edition (at left) alongside the reprint edition published by Stitt, Chatterton-Peck and Grosset & Dunlap (maybe also by Mershon in that 1903-04 period; I have not seen a copy).

Anyway, as shown above, the reprint editions have a distinctly different cover design in pale green (it often fades to ivory) cloth. The original Wessels edition is



slate-blue cloth. I bring this up because I have seen G&D copies offered on eBay as first editions, which they definitely are not.

Wessels also published the equally scarce first edition of *Bob, the Photographer*, as by "Arthur M. Winfield." That one came in a beige cover, which was completely changed in design and color (to medium blue) when the title went over to Stitt, C-P and G&D (along with *Lost in the Land of Ice* included as part of G&D's eight-title Enterprise Books publisher's series).

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Fred is a doctoral candidate in English at Northern Illinois University, and his article starting on Page 3 of this issue is based on his research as a 2016 recipient of NIU's Horatio Alger Fellowship for the Study of American Popular Culture.

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# Roger Starbuck and Horatio Alger

(Continued from Page 3)

His connections to Alger were an unexpected finding.

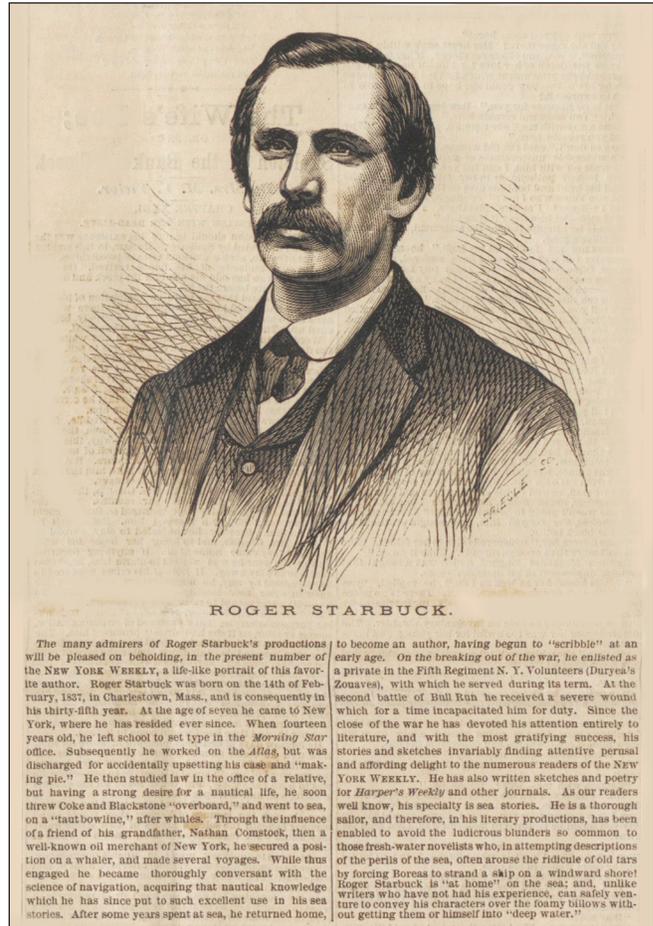
One phase of my research involved reviewing Starbuck's many contributions to the *Weekly*. The earliest of these in the collections at NIU, published in February 1860, is "The White Veil; or, The Ocean Bridal: A Tale of the Sea," fairly representative of the content and tone of Starbuck's short yarns, which often anticipate the bitterly ironic stories of Ambrose Bierce. The tale in a nutshell: After a minister marries two passengers aboard a ship at sea, a sudden gale seizes the bride's veil, which flies up and catches on a topsail. The groom climbs the ropes to retrieve it, falls, hits his head on the railing, and plunges overboard. The gale is too severe to allow the crew to turn the ship around. Crewmembers watch as the groom goes under with his hand swaying in the air, as if waving goodbye. In the end, the captain turns to the bride, who has been silent during the harrowing events, and discovers she's dead — from shock.

Starbuck placed numerous such sea tales of the uncanny and unexpected in the *Weekly* during the 1860s and into the early 1870s. Other examples include "The First Blow and the Last" (August 1860), about an old tar, determined never to be flogged, who, after punching his ship's second mate, gets put in the hold — but then on the day of his scheduled flogging is found already deceased from taking poison; "The Death Cry" (December 1864), concerning a sailor who, after drinking coffee poisoned by a rival shipmate, appears dead but then cries out to save himself just before being buried at sea; and "The Tyrant's Doom" (November 1865), in which a tyrannical mate forces a young sailor to climb the spanker boom and scrape it clean with a sharp knife, an order which only results in the mate's death when, as a squall hits and the sailor falls, the knife fatally strikes the mate. These three are among dozens of Starbuck's short pieces that have not yet been cataloged. Compared to such nautical offerings, his serial "Upward and Onward" boldly stands out.

## Ragged Newsboy to Respectable Bookkeeper

"Upward and Onward" opens with a focus on a scruffy youth selling newspapers on the streets of lower Manhattan:

A thin, freckled face, a slender frame, old, torn cap, trousers with holes in them, shoes out at the toes,



Portrait and biographical sketch of Roger Starbuck (Augustus Comstock) from Page 4 of the *New York Weekly* issue of Oct. 5, 1871.

yet neatly brushed, age about eleven — such was the appearance of a little boy who, with a bundle of papers under his arm, stood near the corner of South street and Chambers.

An old gentleman came along the street.

"Paper, sir?" inquired the lad. "One cent."

The person addressed started, stared at the boy a moment, and turning deadly pale, kept on.

"What made him act so?" thought little Fred Start, the name of the lad. "Wonder if he'll act so again?"

Events that follow stress the young hero's inner strength. When Fred stops an older bully from pounding a fellow newsboy, the bully turns and pounds Fred until nearly senseless. After a rag-picker intervenes and drives the bully away, Fred washes himself in the river and then immediately starts selling papers again. "There's *something* in that boy," remarks an admiring longshoreman, who has witnessed these displays of

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# Roger Starbuck and Horatio Alger

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Fred's grit. Later, "with the air of a prince," Fred returns home, which is a small cave under an archway behind a riverside warehouse. Before sleep, he ponders ways to improve his abode — "my own property, by 'habus' corpus," he says to himself — and then declares: "Wish I had a mother or father livin.'"

That night, when this stalwart orphan wakes up and notices three men breaking into the warehouse, he shows further courage and inspires more sympathy: he tries to sneak past the burglars to summon the police, but in the process one of them grabs him, drags him to the riverbank, ties him to a heavy stone, and throws him in the water to drown.

From the outset, then, Starbuck's Fred Start displays several hallmarks of a hero in the mold of Dick Hunter: he's a virtuous youth, homeless, who sleeps in a makeshift bedchamber, thinks of domestic improvement, quaintly pronounces Latinate terms, and, in a matter of hours, confronts a bully and challenges three crooked adults. Needless to say, he escapes a watery death.

In chapter 2, after twisting off the ropes binding him to the sinking stone, he swims to the dock, leads police to the warehouse, and ultimately helps thwart the burglary. The next day, when Fred meets the grateful warehouse owner, he recognizes him as the man he encountered the prior afternoon while selling papers. The old man blanches again. Their exchange then hints at family connections:

"What is your name, my boy? said Mr. Barnes, evidently recovering his self possession with a powerful effort.

"Fred Start, sir."

The old man looked relieved; then he scrutinized the lad closely.

"It is very strange," he muttered to himself.

"What's very strange?" inquired Fred. "I never was told of bein' strange before."

The man seemed to reflect a moment.

"Your parents are not living?"

"No, sir; died when I wuz too young to know nothin' about it."

The old man wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"How would you like to be my errand boy?" (1)

Long story short: in the concluding chapter of the final installment, the big reveal weaves together the Alger-inspired theme of the Rise to Respectability (Scharnhorst 75-6) and a story-paper staple, the Grand Reunion theme (Noel 144-56). Fred is actually the grandson of warehouse owner Barnes and son of the old man's estranged older son Henry, a murderer who early in the story disguises himself and takes on the name Owen Merrill so that he can embezzle and ruin his father's business. In contrast, Fred Start — "or Barnes, as we must now call him," the narrator adds — winds up becoming a bookkeeper for a successful firm. Not for the first time, at the end of the story the narrator drops in some Alger-inspired moral commentary:

Step by step, Fred has ascended the ladder, commencing at the lower round, and mounting higher and higher, until he had at length attained the summit, and could now look down with a smile of pride upon the many obstacles and discouragements to his success which he had so manfully overcome. From him let every boy in the land take a lesson, and make up his mind NEVER TO BE KEPT DOWN. (3)

Such asides, particularly those with phrases highlighted in all caps, rarely appear in Starbuck's sea stories.

Yet, along with its resemblances to *Ragged Dick* and other Alger juveniles, "Upward and Onward" does contain a few story twists that recall pieces of Starbuck's maritime creations. In the second installment, Fred gets Shanghai'd and falls in love with the ship captain's daughter, Annie Band, who helps him escape before her father can abandon him on a remote island.

Later, at age 19 and back in the city, Fred stops a runaway carriage with a maiden in it. She turns out to be Annie, and, after the good deed, Captain Band grudgingly allows Fred to visit her. In a scuffle during the visit, the captain shoots his pistol, the bullet grazes Fred's arm, and Fred then stays to be nursed by Annie. Fred's evil father, still passing himself off as Owen Merrill, then comes to visit the captain. He's an old acquaintance who desires to marry Annie. "I will never marry that man," she tells her father. Underpinning the ensuing exchange, in which the captain seeks to force Annie to join Merrill on a coach ride, is a hint at a terrible past:

"Remember ... that this man has a secret of mine. Would you see your own parent perish upon the gallows?"

"Heaven forbid. Oh, father, why have you

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STREET AND SHITTING

# NEW YORK WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE, ROMANCE, AMUSEMENTS &

VOL. XXVII.

FRANCIS S. STREET, Proprietors.  
FRANCIS S. SMITH,

NEW YORK, AUGUST 5, 1872.

TERMS: Three Dollars Per Year,  
Two Copies Five Dollars.

No. 39.



"Miss Hester," said Halbert, consequentially, "I shall have great pleasure in escorting you home."

## ALGER'S NEW BOYS' STORY.

# BRAVE and BOLD;

OR, THE

# Fortunes of Robert Rushton.

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of **AMBER HOLDEN'S BOUND BOY, RAGGED DICK, SINK OR SWIM, ROUGH AND READY, BEN, THE LUGGAGE BOY, LUCK AND PLUCK,** etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

**THE TOWN'S RIVAL.**  
The main school-room in the Millville Academy was lighted up, and the various desks were occupied by boys and girls of different ages from ten to eighteen, all busily writing under the general direction of Professor George W. Granville, instructor in Plain and Ornamental Penmanship.

Professor Granville, as he styled himself, was a traveling teacher, and generally had two or three traveling schools in progress in different places at the same time. He was really a very good penman, and in a course of twelve lessons, for which he charged the very moderate price of a dollar, not only instructed, but he contrived to impart considerable instruction, and such pupils as chose to learn were likely to profit by his instructions. His course in Millville had been unusually successful. There were a hundred pupils on his list, and there had been no disturbance during the course of ten weeks.

At nine precisely, Professor Granville struck a small bell, and said, in rather a nasal voice:

"You will now stop writing."  
There was a little confusion as the books were closed and the pens were wiped.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the professor, placing one arm under his coat-tail, and extending the other in an oratorical attitude, "this evening completes the course of lessons which I have had the honor and pleasure of giving you. I have endeavored to impart to you an easy and graceful penmanship, such as may be a recommendation to you in after life. It gives me pleasure to state that many of you have made great proficiency, and equalled my highest expectations. There are others, perhaps, who have not been fully acquainted with the practice to reap the full benefit of my instructions. Should my life be spared, I shall hope to give you another course of writing lessons in this place, and I hope I may then have the pleasure of meeting you again as pupils. Let me say in conclusion that I thank you for your patronage and for your good behavior during this course of lessons, and at the same time I bid you good-by."

With the closing words Professor Granville made a low bow, and placed his hand on his heart, as he had done probably fifty times before, on delivering the same speech, which was the stereotyped form in which he closed his evening school.

There was a humming of feet, mingled with a clapping of hands, as the professor closed his speech, and a moment later a boy of sixteen, scribbling on one of the front seats, rose, and, advancing with easy confidence, drew from his pocket a gold pencil case, containing also a pen, and spoke as follows:

"Professor Granville, the members of your writing class, desirous of testifying their appreciation of your services as a teacher, have contributed to buy this gold pencil case, which, in their name, I have great pleasure in presenting to you. Will you receive with it our best wishes for your continued success as a teacher of penmanship?"

With these words he handed the pencil to the professor and returned to his seat.

The applause that ensued was perfectly terrific, causing the dust to rise from the floor where it had lain undisturbed till the violent attack of two hundred feet raised it in clouds, through which the figure of the professor was still visible, with his right arm again extended.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he commenced, "I can not give fitting utterance to the emotions that fill my heart at this most unexpected tribute of regard and mark of appreciation of my humble services. Believe me, I shall always cherish it as a most valued possession, and the sight of it will recall the pleasant, and, I hope, profitable hours which we have passed together this winter. To you in particular, Mr. Rushton, I express my thanks for the teaching and elegant manner in which you have made the presentation, and, in parting with you all, I echo your own good wishes, and shall hope that you may be favored with an abundant measure of health and prosperity."

This speech was also vociferously applauded. It was generally considered an excellent one, and Granville had on previous occasions been the recipient of many such eulogies. He had found it necessary to have a set form of acknowledgment. He was when in this fix it is a hard thing to get out of the moment suitably to offer thanks for an unexpected gift.

"The professor made a bulky speech," said more than that one of the students present.

"So did Bob Rushton," said Edward Kent.

"So did Halbert Davis," "It seemed to me very concealing."

"Perhaps you could do better yourself, Halbert," said Edward Kent.

"Probably I could," said Halbert, haughtily.

"I didn't care to have anything to do with it," returned Halbert scornfully.

"That's lucky," remarked Edward, "was there was a chance of your getting acquainted."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded Halbert, angrily.

"No, I was only telling the truth."

"Halbert turns away, too disgusted to make any reply. He was a boy of sixteen, of slender form and fine appearance, and Halbert's man and individual than late. Probably there was no boy present whose suit was of such fine material as his. But something more than fine clothes is needed to give a fine appearance, and Halbert's man and individual despite the testimony of his glass Halbert considered himself a young man of distinguished appearance, and was utterly blind to his personal defects.

"What contributed to his vanity was his position as the son of the richest man in Millville. In the town a father was superstitious, and partner,

of the great brick factory on the banks of the river, in which hundreds found employment. Halbert found plenty to do upon his, and was in the habit of strutting around the village, swinging a light cane, looking a useful but an ornamental member of the community.

After his brief altercation with Edward Kent, he drew a pair of kid gloves, and looked about the room for Hester Paine, the lawyer's daughter, the daughter being among the girls of her age in Millville. The fact was, that Halbert was rather smitten with Hester, and had made up his mind to escort her home on this particular evening, never doubting that his sweet would be thankfully accepted.

But he was not quick enough. Robert Rushton had already approached Hester, and said, "Miss Hester, will you allow me to see you home?"

"I shall be very glad to have your company, Robert," said Hester.

Robert was a general favorite. He had a bright, attractive face, strong and resolute when there was occasion, frank and earnest at all times. His clothes were neat and clean, but of a coarse, mixed cloth, evidently of low price, suited the circumstances, for he was poor, and his mother and himself depended mainly upon his earnings in the factory for the necessities of life. Hester Paine, being the daughter of a well-to-do lawyer, belonged to the village aristocracy, and so far as worldly wealth was concerned, was far above Robert Rushton. But such considerations never entered her mind as she frankly, and with real pleasure, accepted the escort of the poor factory boy.

Scarcely had she accepted than Halbert Davis approached, smoothing his kid gloves, and pulling at his necktie.

"Miss Hester," he said, consequentially, "I shall have great pleasure in escorting you home."

"Thank you," said Hester, "but I am engaged."

"Engaged?" repeated Halbert, "and to whom?"

"Robert Rushton has kindly offered to take me home," said Hester.

"Never mind! I will relieve him of his duty," said Halbert, in a scornful tone.

"Robert Rushton?" said Halbert, disbelievingly, "I don't believe it. I will see him standing by, I will not trouble you. I will see Miss Paine home."

"Your escort was accepted because you were the first to offer it," said Halbert.

"Miss Hester," said Robert, "I will resign in favor of Halbert, if you wish."

"I don't desire it," said the young girl, promptly.

"Come, Halbert, let us go," said Robert, "I have a carload not to Halbert, since he took Robert's place, but Mrs. Rushton was an excellent manager, and Halbert looked after them, muttering, "I'll teach the factory boys a lesson. He'll be sorry for his misprudence yet."

small that Robert thought he could indulge himself in it, feeling that a good handwriting was a valuable acquisition, and might hereafter procure him employment in some business house. For the present he could do better than to retain his place in the factory.

Robert was up at six the next morning. He spent his morning in sawing and splitting wood enough to last his mother through the day, and then entered the kitchen, where breakfast was ready.

"I am a little late this morning, mother," he said, "I must hurry down my breakfast, or I shall be late at the factory, and that will bring twenty-five cents too fast. It's not healthy."

"I've got a pretty good digestion, mother," said Robert, laughing. "Nothing troubles me."

"You mustn't trifle with it, my son, remember, Robert," said his mother, soberly, "it's just two years to-day since your poor father left us for heaven to take command of his ship."

"So it is, mother; I had forgotten it."

"I little thought then that I should never see him again," said Mrs. Rushton sighing.

"It is strange we have never heard anything of the ship."

"Not so strange, Robert. It must have gone down when no other vessel was in sight."

"I wish we knew the particulars, mother. Sometimes I think father may have escaped from the ship by a boat, and may be still alive."

"I used to think it possible, Robert; but I have given up all hopes of it. Two years have passed, and if your father were alive, we should have seen him or heard from him in one of these ways."

"I am afraid you are right. There's one thing I can't help thinking of, mother," said Robert, thoughtfully. "How is it that father left no property?"

"He received a good salary, did he not?"

"Yes, he had received a good salary for several years."

"He did not spend the whole of it, did he?"

"No, I am sure not. Your father was never extravagant."

"He never ever spoke to you on the subject?"

"He was not in the habit of speaking of his business; but just before he went away, I remember his telling me he had not some money invested, and hoped to add more to it during the voyage which proved fatal to him."

"He didn't tell you how much it was, nor how it was invested?"

"No, that was all he said. Since his death, I have looked over here in this corner for some paper which would throw light upon it, but I have been unable to find it. I'm not sure so much for myself, but I should be glad if you did not have to work for it."

"Never mind me, mother; I'm young and strong. I can earn my own money."

"I am rich in a good son, Robert."

"I can't work—but it's hard on you, Robert, after all. And now, to change the subject, I suspect I have corrected the errand of Halbert Davis."

"How is that?" asked Mrs. Rushton.

"I went home with Hester Paine, last evening, from writing-school. Just as she had accepted my escort, Halbert came up and in a condescending way informed her that he would see her home."

"That did she say?"

"She said she would see me. He looked to me, and said coolly that he would relieve me of the duty, and declined his obliging offer. The lawyer's daughter, I can tell you, is full of self-conceit, and I imagine, he wondered how any one could confer me to her."

"I am sorry you have incurred his enemy, Robert."

"I don't care, my mother. I'll be glad to see him."

"I don't know his father; the superintendent of the factory."

### CHAPTER II.

#### AN ALTERCATION.

Mrs. Rushton and her son occupied a little cottage, a few rods from the factory. Behind it were a few square rods of garden, in which Robert raised a few vegetables, working industriously before or after his labor in the factory. They lived in a very plain way, but Mrs. Rushton was an excellent manager, and they had never lacked the common comforts of life. The husband and father had followed the sea two years before, he left the port of Boston as captain of the ship *Serrano*, bound for Calcutta. Not long had reached his wife and son since then, and it was generally believed that it had gone to the bottom of the sea, and Halbert's man and individual upon himself the support of the family. He was now able to earn six dollars a week, and save the mother's earnings in braiding straw for a business, in a neighboring town supported them, though they were unable to lay up anything. The price of a man at the writing school was so

# Roger Starbuck and Horatio Alger

(Continued from Page 7)

not been a good man? Why have you led such a wicked life?"

"It matters not. I have done so, and let that suffice. Now, then, go below and see this Merrill, and make your excuses, if you want to, about riding out with him; but go to him you must, or he will be angry and make great trouble for me." (5)

Later, when Merrill — that is, Henry Barnes — gets arrested for murder, he informs police of Captain Band's crime: having sailed for years in command of a slave ship. This detail recalls a central story element in one of Starbuck's dime novels: *The Slaver Captain*, originally published in 1866 as *Bessie, the Slaver's Daughter*. The above exchange from "Upward and Onward" even resembles a crucial conversation in *The Slaver Captain* between father and daughter. In the latter story, when Captain Wykes threatens to kill a sailor from another vessel who finds out about his criminal involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, Bessie intervenes:

"Surely, papa, you would not commit murder!" she cried, nervously grasping his arms. "What has this young man done to you, that you should wish to take his life? Is even human life not sacred in your eyes? Alas, is your lawless career to end in this?"

"None of your lectures, now, Bessie," interrupted Wykes gruffly. "I'm in no mood for argument. If you wished to see your own father hung, or, what is worse, imprisoned for life, why, it would do to suffer this chap to live to tell tales; but, my duty to my crew won't permit me. He *must die!*" (12)

"Upward and Onward" thus contains traces of Starbuck's authorial signature even though it largely follows the general framework of an Alger story.

Producing such a piece after a decade in which Street and Smith regularly published his sea stories suggests that Starbuck sought a break from his customary genre. His turn to the Alger formula reflects the high profile of Alger's juveniles following the great popularity of *Ragged Dick*. It also marks one of Starbuck's first forays into juvenile fiction, a genre he embraced — as did many popular writers — in the latter part of the 19th

century. Could Starbuck's popular sea fiction — now complemented by this *Rise to Respectability* serial — have in turn influenced Alger's 1872 serial in the *Weekly*?

## "Brave and Bold" on Land and Sea

My question approaches reasonability when surveying some of the curious similarities between the two stories. The action in the first installment of Alger's "Brave and Bold; or, The Fortunes of Robert Rushton" opens in a classroom instead of on a street corner, yet in chapter 2 the hero does shine in an altercation with a bully of sorts, recalling Fred Start's entrance in Starbuck's narrative. When Herbert Davis, the rich son of the factory owner, argues with Robert about courting Hester Paine and strikes him with his cane, Robert immediately grabs the rod and hits back, breaking it apart. Later in the story, in a tangle with Ben Haley, the rascally nephew of Paul Nichols, Robert shows skill at handling a gun by shooting Ben in the shoulder. Scharnhorst and Bales note that this incident reflects Alger's efforts at this point in his career to create "more sensational and violent fiction" at the behest of the *Weekly's* editors (94).<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, the incident also evokes Captain Band's shooting of Fred Start in the serial by Starbuck, whose stories generously offer up episodes of violence. "Brave and Bold" also has a nautical backstory, more prominent than the one in "Upward and Onward." Robert's father, a ship's captain, is believed to have been lost at sea on a voyage to Calcutta. Chatting over breakfast on the morning after Robert's scuffle with Herbert, mother and son recall Captain Rushton's disappearance:

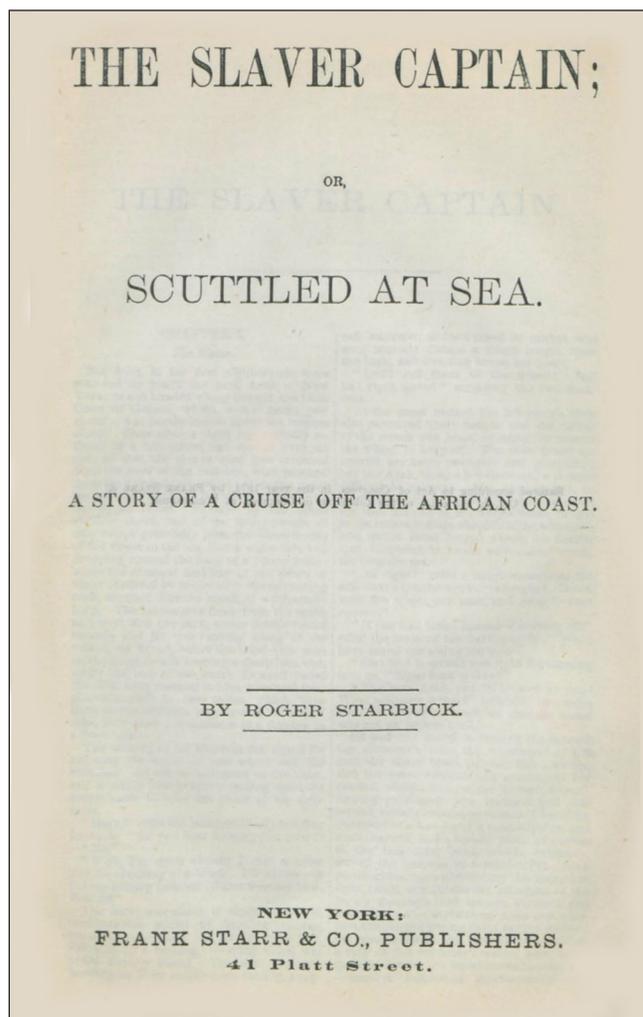
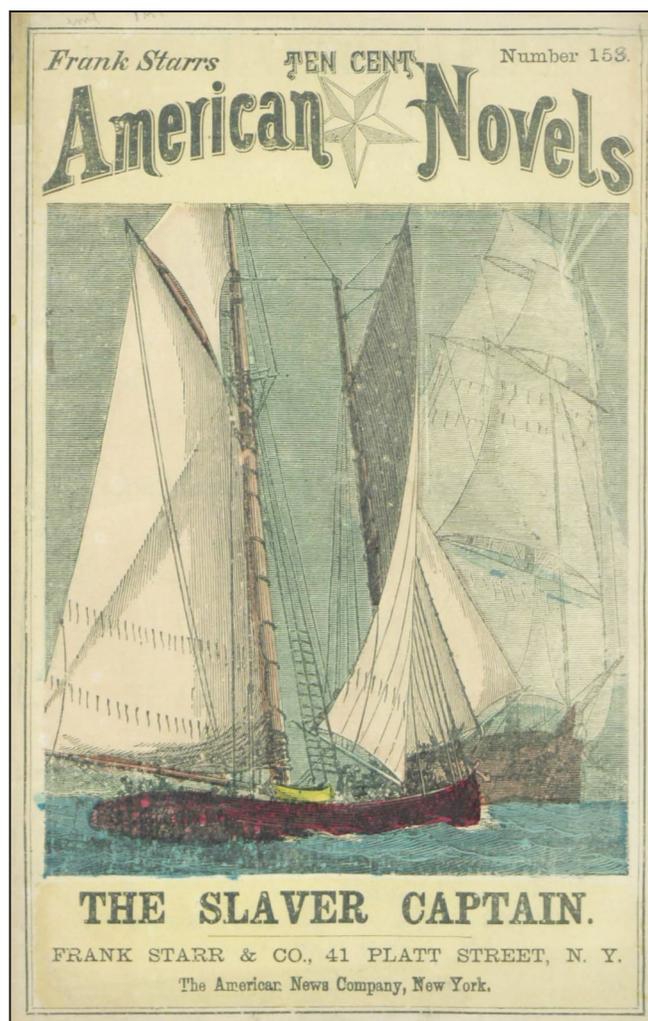
"It is strange we have never heard anything of the ship."

"Not so strange, Robert. It must have gone down when no other vessel was in sight."

"I wish we knew the particulars, mother. Sometimes I think father may have escaped from the ship in a boat, and may be still alive." (1)

As in Starbuck's serial, and in line with story-paper conventions, dialogue here in the early part of the narrative outlines a revelation that will come later. When Robert learns, via a message in a bottle, that his father is in fact alive, he goes to sea in search of him. At one point his journey overlaps slightly with Fred Start's adventures in that he is successfully abandoned by the evil Captain Haley on a remote island.<sup>4</sup> With help from an old tar named Bates, Robert eventually survives the ordeal and makes his way to Calcutta, where he reunites with his lost father, who has been staying in

(Continued on Page 10)



Cover and title page of Roger Starbuck's *The Slaver Captain; or, Scuttled at Sea: A Story of a Cruise off the African Coast* (1874), originally published as *Scuttled; or, Bessie, the Slaver's Daughter: A Story of a Cruise off the African Coast* (1866). The titular captain's secret involvement in the illegal transportation of slaves is echoed in Starbuck's "Upward and Onward."

## Roger Starbuck and Horatio Alger

(Continued from Page 9)

a city boarding house. Notably, another small trace of Starbuck's serial emerges in the family name of the widow who runs the place: Mrs. Start.

### Promotional Connections

Yet the most concrete connections between these two serials pertain to how Street and Smith promoted them in the *Weekly*. In the case of both stories, the editors included a biographical sketch and portrait of the author in the issue featuring the first installment. This promotional scheme sheds light on the stature of

Starbuck, Alger, and the *Weekly* in the early 1870s. As Robert E. Kasper notes, beginning in the late 1850s, Street and Smith aimed to boost circulation and sales of the *Weekly* by employing innovative advertising campaigns involving billboards, posters, circulars, and show-cards mentioning the paper (8).

Another new technique was to distribute free publications in which the firm printed the first few chapters of a new serial along with an invitation to readers to find the rest of the story in the *Weekly*; the first Alger piece in the *Weekly* advertised with such a teaser was "Brave and Bold; or, The Fortunes of Robert Rushton" (8).<sup>5</sup> Kasper also mentions an additional publicity item from the period: the *carte de visite*, an albumen print of a story character or the like mounted on a thick paper card (10-11). Such campaigns coincided with the remarkable growth of the *Weekly*,

which by 1870 boasted a circulation of 300,000 (Noel 114). The biographical sketches of Starbuck and Alger represent an elaboration of sorts on the teaser, with a focus on the life of the popular author instead of the author's latest story. The portraits suggest a twist on the *carte de visite*. With this publicity device, Street and Smith spotlighted stars among the many contributors to their popular story weekly. That one of these stars was Horatio Alger comes as no surprise, given his successes by 1870 and continuing popularity. That another was Roger Starbuck may invite wonder among modern readers. However, as archives of 19th-century popular literature become more available through digitization, I expect Starbuck's sea adventures — perhaps even his forays into juvenile fiction — will once again find a curious and appreciative audience.

\* \* \*

**Acknowledgments:** Thanks to the Horatio Alger Society for sponsoring the Horatio Alger Fellowship for the Study of American Popular Culture. Special thanks to Angie Schroeder (Rare Books and Special Collections) and Sata Prescott (Albert Johannsen Digitization Project) at NIU's Founders Memorial Library for providing images.

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HORATIO ALGER, JR.

This talented young author has enjoyed a career of cumulative successes since his thirteenth year, when, to the astonishment of his parents, he demonstrated that a boy barely in his teens was capable of writing articles worthy of acceptance by the press. To develop the literary genius thus early indicated, he became an assiduous student at Harvard College, advanced rapidly in his studies, and after a brief period bade farewell to that renowned seat of learning, bearing to his birth-place and home, in Revere, near Boston, a diploma which ranked him among the first graduates in a class distinguished for ability. From that time he has been constantly before the public, as a contributor to newspapers and magazines. Among other publications, he has contributed to *Harpers' Magazine*, *Harpers' Weekly*, *Painson's Magazine*, and the *North American Review*, besides a number of popular story papers. To qualify himself for his literary vocation, by studying men and manners in foreign countries, he visited Europe in 1860, returning to his native land soon after the outbreak of the war. The national conflict aroused his poetic imagination, and during the war he wrote several ballads, which at once became popular; some of them, indeed, were considered so meritorious that they have been included in the "Rebellion Record," and other collections. His earlier literary work was intended for the entertainment of mature readers; as, for example, his story of "Marie Bertrand; or, The Felon's Daughter," which appeared in the *New York Weekly* over eight years ago. Shortly after the publication of the story just named, he essayed the juvenile line, and was so remarkably successful that he has since made it a specialty. Fourteen of his juvenile stories have been published in book-form, all of which have had a large sale—the six works designated "The Ragged Dick Series," being so popular as to have already reached an aggregate sale of sixty thousand.

Mr. Alger seems to have closely studied the youthful mind, for in supplying it with instruction, in the guise of entertainment, and inculcating moral

principles, by representing in fiction the punishment attending evil, he addresses himself with force and effect to the inner monitor. The impressions thus received are likely to influence for good his young readers; and this is the reason why Horatio Alger's boys' stories may be found in all libraries, and even among those belonging to Sunday Schools. So high an authority as the *New York Evening Post* pronounced Mr. A. "verry more successful than Greenwood in London, in depicting the street life of the great city; his sketches of the little Arabs of our streets are very life-like and effective."

Six years since, Mr. Alger removed to New York, where he has made street life a special study, having spent much time in exploring the highways and byways of the metropolis, familiarizing himself with the condition and habits of the neglected children who roam its thoroughfares. His first juvenile serial for the *NEW YORK WEEKLY*, "Abner Holt's Bound Boy," was eagerly read by our million of readers, about a year ago, and so won the approbation of parents, and the enthusiasm of the boys and girls, that we deemed the gifted author an attractive card, and therefore induced him to become a regular contributor.

In the present number of the *NEW YORK WEEKLY* we publish the opening chapters of another new story by HORATIO ALGER, JR., entitled "BRAVE AND BOLD; OR, THE FORTUNES OF ROBERT RUSHTON." Our young readers will require no urging to read it, as they are well aware of the author's skill in delighting and instructing the juvenile mind. We recommend it to parents, confident that the guardians of youth will find it in every respect worthy of commendation, and just the kind of story they would place in the hands of their children; for it pointedly illustrates the reward which must attend a life of truth, honesty, and manliness, and encourages every boy to imitate the example of ROBERT RUSHTON, who faced the misfortunes which beset him with the heart of a little hero, and was ever BRAVE AND BOLD.

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(Continued on Page 12)

# Roger Starbuck and Horatio Alger

(Continued from Page 11)

*Novels*, no. 153, Frank Starr, 29 Sept. 1874. Originally published as *Scuttled; or, Bessie, the Slaver's Daughter: A Story of a Cruise off the African Coast*. *American Tales*, no. 40, Sinclair Tousey, 28 Aug. 1866.

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## NOTES

1. In Albert Johannsen's monumental Beadle and Adams bibliography, the portrait of Roger Starbuck and parts of his biographical information derive from this *New York Weekly* sketch. See "Comstock, Augustus (Roger Starbuck)" in the online bibliography: <[www.ulib.niu.edu/badndp/comstock\\_augustus.html](http://www.ulib.niu.edu/badndp/comstock_augustus.html)>.

2. Both nineteenth-century books about the *Globe* mutiny, the first by Lay and Cyrus and the second by William Comstock, are quoted in the "Extracts" section that precedes the narrative in Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

3. Scharnhorst and Bales also note that Alger's 1866 poem "Friar Anselmo," in which the friar expresses a death wish, appears in the same 5 August 1871 issue of the *Weekly*; they suggest its appearance further signals the paper's embracing of sensational material (94). The piece appears on page 5 of the issue and is titled "Friar Anselmo: A Medieval Legend."



A *carte de visite*, promoting Alger's serialization of "Tony the Tramp," starting with the June 1876 issue of *New York Weekly*.

## Upward and Onward;

OR,

## A BRAVE BOY'S STRUGGLES.

By Roger Starbuck.

### CHAPTER I.

A thin, freckled face, a slender frame, old, torn cap, trowsers with holes in them, shoes out at the toes, yet neatly brushed, age about eleven—such was the appearance of a little boy who, with a bundle of papers under his arm, stood near the corner of South street and Chambers.

An old gentleman came along the street.

"Paper, sir?" inquired the lad. "One cent."

The person addressed started, stared at the boy a moment, and turning deadly pale, kept on.

"What made him act so?" thought little Fred Start, the name of the lad. "Wonder if he'll act so again?"

He ran after the old man, and had nearly reached him, when his attention was diverted to another quarter. A big boy of thirteen was pounding a little one of eleven, who had refused to give up to him the stump of a cigar he had picked up.

Fred Start walked up to the big boy, and in a rather sharp voice told him to let the little one go.

The big boy, however, simply answered:

"Do you want some?"

And dealing the one he had been pounding a farewell kick, made preparations to give some to the other.

Hungry and tired as he was, little Fred Start did not run away. As the big boy came toward him, his great swollen head bent sideways as if for "butting," his fists tightly clenched, the other, avoiding a blow aimed at him, darted forward and struck his antagonist square between the eyes. Ere the latter could recover from the shock of the "concussion," he dealt him another blow on the side of the head.

Soon, however, the larger boy recovering himself, a desperate battle took place. Little Fred was game to the last, but the other pounded him until he was near senseless. Finally, a benevolent rag-picker parted the combatants with his hook, when the big boy betook himself off.

Little Fred then went to the river, and having washed himself, continued, in spite of his injuries, to sell his papers.

Several longshoremen who witnessed all this, shook their heads, and one of them, an old Swede, said, as he took his pipe from his mouth:

"There's *something* in that boy. You may be sure of that!"

Having "sold out," Fred, with the air of a prince, went "home."

**Text of the opening events in the first column of Roger Starbuck's "Upward and Onward; or, a Brave Boy's Struggles," published on Oct. 5, 1871.**

4. In the island sequence of "Brave and Bold," the brief mentions of *Robinson Crusoe* in chapters 29 and 31 are conventional nods to Defoe. As Scharnhorst notes, Alger referenced *Crusoe*, as well as books by Dana and Melville, in several of his juveniles dealing with maritime adventure (73).

5. I have located similar teasers for a serial sea story by Starbuck that began in the *Weekly* on 29 June 1874: "The Boy Diver; or, Cora, the Net Weaver." However, instead of distributing them in free sheets, Street and Smith placed the opening episodes in the *New York Daily Tribune* on 22 June and *The New York Times* on 23 June.



**A resident walks along sand-covered Fort Lauderdale Beach Boulevard in the immediate aftermath following last month's visit by Hurricane Irma to Florida. Fort Lauderdale, site of the 2018 H.A.S. convention, received only moderate damage from the storm. Convention host James King reports we're still right on schedule for our visit to south Florida on May 3-6, and he'll have preview articles beginning with the next issue of Newsboy.**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill:

I just thought I would pen a few lines to let your readers know that the site of next year's convention, Fort Lauderdale, has survived this year's storms largely intact and should show none the worse for wear by next spring.

I've weathered many a hurricane in south Florida, going back to Hurricane "Donna" in 1960, and I can remember few as foreboding as "Irma" in the days of her approach as she lashed the Caribees and set her sights on the Sunshine State. We in south Florida, indeed the whole peninsula, prepared for the worst as the storm's projected path remained uncertain. As these things go, some were spared while others were not, and we in Fort Lauderdale were among the fortunate to escape Irma's worst.

The Keys got it and got it bad, with much of the lower Keys suffering the most. Many trailer parks and mobile-home parks were obliterated, to say nothing of the countless tiki huts! Utilities were wiped out and even many concrete structures were destroyed. Rebuilding will take years, but already Key West has reopened for business and the tourists are returning.

The center of the storm traveled up the west coast of the state, thus missing Fort Lauderdale by over one hundred miles. Nevertheless, we endured low hurricane-force winds. Most of our damage was little more than downed trees and tree limbs, telegraph poles and light-weight structures such as aluminium awnings and pool enclosures, with minor flooding and beach sand strewn across the coastal highways. Three weeks later and it's practically business as usual!

Despite an unusually active season, I don't expect at this late date that we should experience any more

major storms this year. Autumnal changes are cooling temperatures down into the eighties, and by the middle of winter I may even have to consider wearing a long-sleeved shirt for a day or two!

So don't despair, next year's convention in the sunny climes of Florida is still on. Further details will be provided in the forthcoming issues of **Newsboy**.

With kindest regards, I remain,

Your Partic'lar Friend,  
James King (PF-1126)  
711 East Plantation Circle  
Plantation, FL 33324  
Email: jamesreed9@gmx.com

Dear Bill:

I really liked the recent **Newsboy**. I especially enjoyed your piece on Jack Dizer. VERY good ... just fascinating, and so well written, too. A great, great job. Thanks so much!

I am on the last chapter of my Cubs book. Hope to get it done by Christmas, but then I want to get a lot of photographs. I can't cover everyone in the book, of course, and so I hope to have neat photos and then have captions that add a lot of explanatory material. The Library of Congress has FREE photographs, and then there is the Hall of Fame.

I expect it to be about 130,000 words. I sent all except the last chapter to my editor to take a look at (a really knowledgeable baseball guy). He told me that he is not even going to send it out for peer review, as he likes it so much.

Sincerely,  
Jack Bales (PF-258)  
422 Greenbrier Court  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
Email: jbales@umw.edu

# Florence Kimball Russel:

## *An author truly ‘Born to the Blue’*

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

My constant search for lesser-known writers of books for young people has turned up some interesting results. This installment in an ongoing series marks the third time I have covered a woman author whose work deserves to be better known and appreciated. Most recently, I wrote for *Newsboy* about Sara Ware Bassett (September-October 2015), and her undeservedly overlooked **Invention Series**. Years ago I offered a profile on Mary P. Wells Smith, the author of two Colonial-era themed series set in her native Massachusetts.

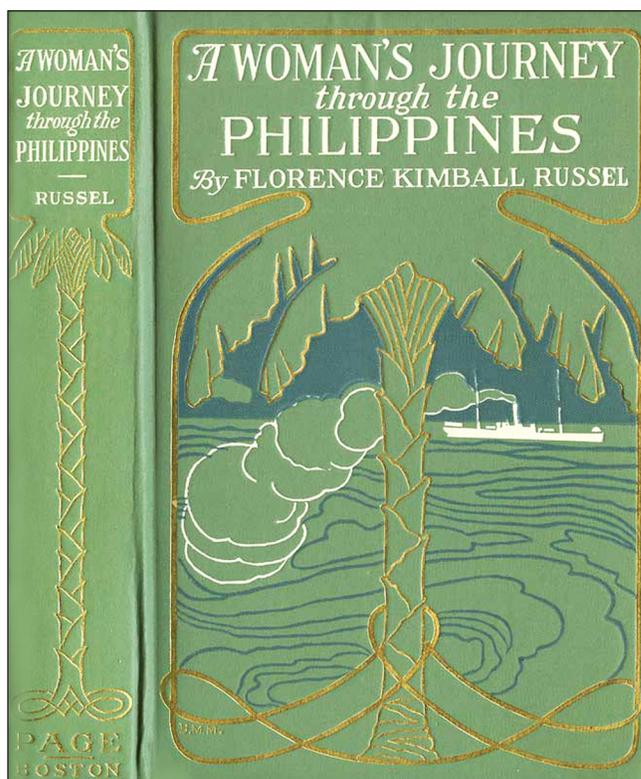
This time, we'll discuss the life and work of Florence Kimball Russel (1873-1963), who is listed in Mattson and Davis as writing only a single series, **The Boys' Story of the Army Series**, three volumes between 1906-1914.

The subtitle of this article is appropriate, because Mrs. Russel was indeed "born to the blue" as the third of four children of Army General Amos Samuel Kimball (1840-1909) and Harriet (Crary) Kimball (1843-1931), born at the U.S. Army post at Fort Riley Kansas (in Geary County). After primary school, her formal education included Livingston Park Seminary in Rochester, N.Y., Dearborn Seminary in Chicago and the Graham School in New York. These various locations were likely due to her father's changing military assignments.

Little is known about Florence's private and professional life other than her profession as a writer of stories and poetry for such periodicals as **Harper's Bazaar**, **Everybody's Magazine**, **Life** and **Puck**, among others, along with the **New York Sun** newspaper.

A published humorous poem from this period survives. It is titled "An Exception to the Rule":

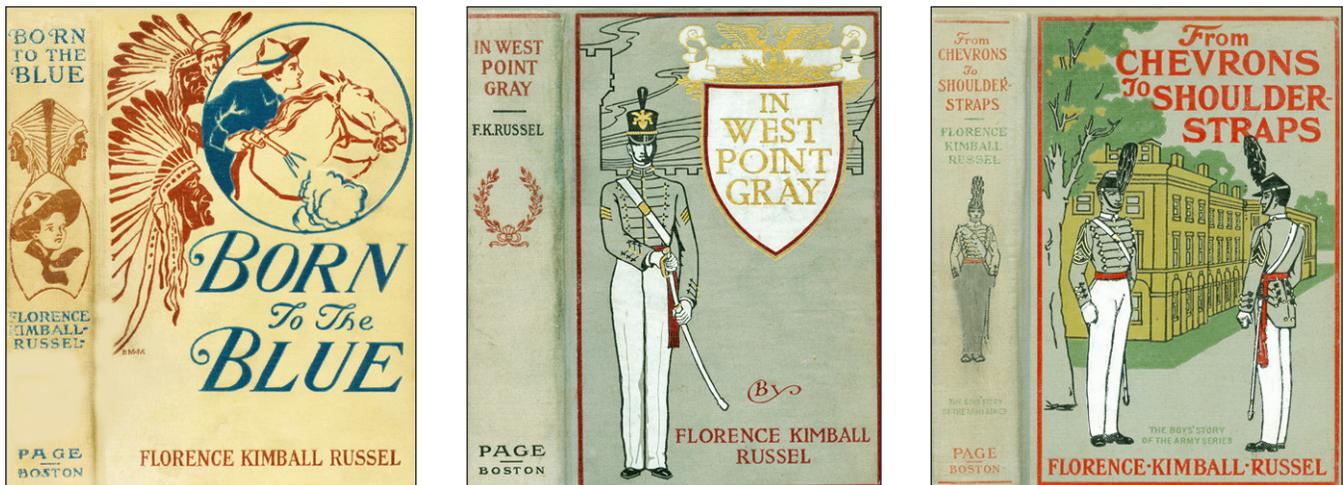
When Helen went abroad last year  
 Her many friends averred.  
 It was to read her title clear  
 In Burke — a duke preferred.  
 For Helen is a beauty — tall  
 With gray eyes full of mirth —  
 While Helen's bank account is all  
 A coronet is worth.  
 But now she's back again, despite  
 The title to be sold.  
 Her wealth was countless, beauty quite  
 As peerless as of old.



Florence Kimball Russel's *A Woman's Journey through the Philippines* (L.C. Page, 1907), recounts her experiences aboard the *Burnside*, a United States cable-laying ship, the lengthy trip starting in late 1900. The full story is available in page-by-page facsimile form at <https://archive.org/details/womansjourneythr00russ>

It was during her time in Chicago that on April 18, 1893, she married Missouri native Edgar A. Russel (1862-1925), at the time a junior artillery officer in the U.S. Army, keeping her family's military lineage intact. Edgar was an 1887 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and went on to a distinguished career, serving in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War with two Silver Star citations.

As an army captain in the years immediately following that conflict, Edgar Russel was in charge of the *U.S.S. Burnside*, which was tasked with laying underwater communications cable in the waters in and around the Philippines. That event was notable for reasons we'll discuss below. As a senior officer (Brigadier General),



**The Boys' Story of the Army Series** comprises these three volumes published by Page between 1906 and 1914.

he served in World War I in the Allied Expeditionary Forces under John J. Pershing in 1917-18.

Edgar Russel rose to the rank of Major General and was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in 1925, three years after retiring from active duty. He was joined at Arlington by Florence following her death in 1963 at age 90.

All this background leads us to Florence Kimball Russel's writing career, which included four books in addition to the magazine and newspaper work noted above. Of special interest is her best-known book by far, *A Woman's Journey through the Philippines*, published by L.C. Page in 1907. It is a combination memoir and travelogue, reporting on her time living aboard the *U.S.S. Burnside* during its cable-laying operations several years earlier. The *Burnside*, incidentally, was a war prize as the ex-Spanish merchant steamer *Rita*.

*A Woman's Journey through the Philippines*, still in print in on-demand editions, contains 270 pages with nearly 80 full-page photographs of the Philippines (a U.S. territory as result of the Spanish-American War) and its native inhabitants. The writing style is contemporary by today's standards, showing creativity and flair for a subject one would usually classify as pedantic.

The three **Boys' Story of the Army** books, all published by L.C. Page, are our main interest as series book collectors. The first was *Born to the Blue* (1906); the second title *In West Point Gray* (1908) and the third *From Chevrons to Shoulder Straps* (1914). They have typical L. C. Page solid-quality bindings, the first title in ivory-colored cloth and the final two in medium gray, all with multicolored illustrations on the covers and eight interior black-and-white plates for Volume 1 (by R. Farrington Elwell) and six each in Volume 2 (James K. Bonnar) and Volume 3 (John Goss).

The Publisher's Note introducing the first book sets the tone for the series:

The readers of "Born to the Blue" will be interested in knowing that the author's story is written at first hand. Mrs. Russel is in every way an "army woman," the daughter of an officer, born at a frontier post. Her earliest recollections are of the army, and throughout her life her connection with it has never been severed. She is the wife of Major Edgar Russel and the sister of another army officer. Many of the incidents which she has woven into "Born to the Blue" are taken from her own experiences, and the climax of the story is based on the personal experiences of her brother.

The opening volume follows the fictional hero, Jack Stirling, son of an army officer and shows his very young years playing with toy soldiers and other child's games, while growing up on his father's garrison post. Russel mainly keeps young Jack's family name anonymous. He is simply "Jack" to the readers. And Jack's birthday — on July 4 — was both appropriate and prophetic:

Such a strong, sturdy baby he was, a veritable Fourth of July boy, with the national colours very well produced in his very red skin, his blue eyes and his fine white hair.

"You're born to the blue, Jack," his mother whispered delightedly, over and over again. "Born to the blue!"

By the time of the second book, young Jack now is better known by his full name — Jack Stirling — and he is off to West Point, as the book's subtitle states, "... As Plebe and Yearling." It covers all sorts of descriptive plot twists, including academic study, military training and

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## President's column

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lived in a boarding house on Mott Street. In those days, Mott Street was part of Five Points, one of the roughest parts of New York. Dick considered it a major advancement when he was able to move up to Bleecker Street, much of which today is in Greenwich Village or the East Village. Richard Hunter later visits some lots on 45th Street, which one of his employers is considering investing — this was then only first being developed and is now the heart of Midtown Manhattan adjacent to Grand Central Terminal.

Other Five Points locations were Leonard Street, where the title characters of *Rufus and Rose* first found themselves. Alger makes a point of describing the sordid character of this street:

... he came in sight of the Tombs, which is situated at the northwest corner of Centre and Leonard Streets, fronting the first. It is a grim-looking building, built of massive stone. Leonard Street, between Centre and Baxter Streets, is wretched and squalid, not as bad perhaps as some of the streets in the neighborhood, — for example, Baxter Street, — but a very undesirable residence.

Today, this neighborhood is quite different from what it was more than a century and one half ago. The Tombs, which was then the principal prison in the city, was later moved a block north as part of the Criminal Courts Building on Centre Street, but quickly acquired as fearsome a reputation as its predecessor building, and the city was ordered to close it decades ago. However, that long-uninhabited building, at the north end of the complex, still stands.

Leonard Street has often been a handy way to refer to the part of the southern end of the complex that fronts on that street and which houses the office of the District Attorney of New York County. Directly south of Leonard Street is a New York State Office Building, in which I once had an office when directing a justice system project. Centre Street, both above and especially below Leonard, where Centre passes through Foley Square, is the heart of New York's courthouses: federal, state, and city.

Alger often refers to Pearl Street, which begins at Foley Square between the federal and state courthouses, as "that most crooked of all New York avenues" presumably referring to the meandering route the street follows, although it does now lead to the latest location of police headquarters in New York.

Baxter Street is behind the courthouses, facing a park and playground which likely replaced the squalid tenements and flophouses to which Alger presumably attributed its notorious reputation. Forlini's, a 75-year-old Italian restaurant, is a mainstay of Baxter Street, filled at lunch with judges and lawyers from the courthouses. Baxter leads to Mott Street, site of Richard Hunter's first and unpleasant boarding house, which is now in the heart of New York's Chinatown.

Alger collectors frequently find themselves specializing in some particular aspect of his writing. Checking out where he set his scenes can disclose amazing contrasts between what these places were like in the mid-1800s and their appearance and character today.

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## Florence Kimball Russel:

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athletic challenges, and all the crucial elements toward building an effective army officer

The third book takes that raw and unpolished plebe and yearling, tackles such important elements of West Point life as the honor code, social life and sports, turning a maturing Jack Stirling into a self-reliant young army leader. The story takes us right up to his commissioning as a lieutenant on "The Plain."

Several West Point series exist, but Florence Kimball Russel's **Boys' Story of the Army Series** ranks among the very best. She was a very gifted writer, born at the right place and at the right time — to the blue, indeed.



The monument marking Florence Kimball Russel's final resting place at Arlington National Cemetery, alongside her husband, Major General Edgar A. Russel.