



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 – 1899

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

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NUMBER 1

2019 convention preview

‘Bears of Blue River’ welcome H.A.S.



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The “Balsers and the Bears” sculpture by Mary Elizabeth Stout in the north entry of the town circle depicts young hero Brent Balsers holding up a pair of bear cubs as described in Shelbyville author Charles Major’s *The Bears of Blue River*.

Howard M. Brier’s Barry Martin ‘Skycraft’ Series

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President's column

Good morning from Houston.

My hopes are that everyone has had a great start to the new year. It sure seems like the months and years are flying by. I still am writing 2017 on some checks. (Yes, I still pay some bills with checks and even put the payments in envelopes and mail them).

I am looking forward to heading to Shelbyville for our annual convention. Of course, for me, Indiana is a reminder of a driving trip I took from Wisconsin to Florida in the 1970s. There were five of us in the car when we heard a very loud crash. I looked behind me and saw the left passenger side tire rolling down the road behind us. The friction of the axle was leaving a trail of flames behind the car as the driver finally stopped the vehicle. That put an exclamation mark on spring break 1972.

An issue I am facing is what will become of my book collections after I am gone. I suspect that I am not alone in searching for a solution. As most of us realize, except for some special books or particular titles, most of the Algers, Optics, Ellises and the like will have little value in the future. I suppose the last man/woman standing is certain to get some real deals on book prices. Anyway, what I have done is divide my collections into sections and I am approaching institutions. Of course, it is one thing to donate 100-200 books; it is another matter altogether to offer thousands of dust jacketed series books. Space is a major consideration for many libraries. Perhaps someone reading this will be able to help me a bit.

As many of you may know, my work is mostly with 19th century juveniles. Among the more interesting books of this era (to me) are the oversized books, many of which were published in elegant gilt as well as with illuminated board covers. There were two basic categories of these books: Travelogue Series and the omnibus books which contain numerous stories, puzzles, illustrations, etc.

The best known example of the latter books are the **Chatterboxes**. The travelogue series were incredibly popular. Children and adults could learn about mysterious/exotic lands with these extensively illustrated volumes. The titles predated the very popular stereoview sets of foreign lands which were produced mainly in the 1890s-1900s, and no other medium captured the

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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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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

2019 convention preview

'Bears of Blue River' set for June 6-9

By Bob Sipes (PF-1067)

We welcome anyone who collects children's series books, dime novels, story papers and related collectibles to Shelbyville Indiana, June 6-9, 2019 for the Horatio Alger Society's "Bears of Blue River" convention. We are looking forward to seeing old friends, making new ones, and having a great time while doing so.

Shelbyville is a small town of approximately 20,000 with a history dating back to the early 1800s. Jacob Whetzel, brother of Lewis Whetzel (the famous Indian fighter who figured in many dime novels and even a few Edward Ellis books) and some friends blazed a wilderness road that became known as the "Whetzel Trace." This road passed through what became Shelby County just north of Shelbyville, and Shelby County's first settlers traveled this road. Shelby County and hence, Shelbyville, is named after Isaac Shelby, former Governor of Kentucky and famous Indian Wars soldier who led many of Shelby County's first settlers.

Interestingly, Shelbyville was home to the first "railroad" west of the Alleghany Mountains. The seeming practicality of railroads in the 1820s spurred early residents of Shelby County to build a railroad from the southern suburbs of Shelbyville to Lewis Creek a small community 1.5 miles distant. The railroad was constructed entirely of wood and the "railcar" was pulled by a horse. On July 4, 1834, the railroad was placed into operation and passengers were taken round-trip for 25 cents, not exactly a small charge in 1834.

In 1906, an electric streetcar railway, Interurban, was completed between Indianapolis and Shelbyville. It stayed in operation until 1932. The increasing popularity of the automobile and the passage of the Public Utility Holding Act in 1935 signaled the demise of the electric interurban railways. You can learn more about Shelbyville railways by visiting the Shelby County Railroad gallery in the Grover Museum, located in downtown Shelbyville across from the Shelbyville Carnegie Library. The gallery contains multiple running trains, models, signage, tools and more related to Shelby County railroad history. There are many more exhibits including the permanent exhibit "The Streets of Old Shelby."

Shelbyville was also home to Charles Major, who wrote the classic *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. Two books more locally famous by Major are *The Bears of Blue River* and *Uncle Tom Andy Bill*, both of which are boy's books



Interurban streetcar in downtown Shelbyville, early 1900s.

taking place along Big Blue River in Shelby County. A copper statue, recently restored, of Balsler, the boy protagonist of *The Bears of Blue River*, holding up two bear cubs is placed on the north entry into the town circle.

Enclosed with this **Newsboy** is the tentative schedule detailing what will be an entertaining, interesting, and successful convention. Bill Gowen and at least two other speakers will be presenting book and author-related topics on Friday morning. These presentations are always informative and entertaining. We will be holding the annual book auction Friday afternoon and the book sale Saturday morning. We are anticipating a good number of quality books for both the auction and the book sale.

Dinner Friday evening will be held at The Kopper Kettle Inn in Morristown, Indiana. This restaurant began as a tavern in 1858 and has served as an Inn since 1885. In 1923, the owner stopped hotel functions and redecorated the Inn in unique antique pieces for operation as a tea room and restaurant. The Kopper Kettle Inn maintains a vintage charm and historic ambience, along with excellent menu and service and will provide an entertaining venue for dinner and our annual Horatio Alger quiz.

The convention registration form is included in this issue along with the schedule, and you may also register via the H.A.S. website, www.horatioalgersociety.net. Hotel reservations should be made as soon as possible directly to the Holiday Inn Express in Shelbyville. The hotel phone number is (317) 398-0800. Please tell the

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Editor's notebook

The Horatio Alger Society has been in existence closing in on 60 years, an accomplishment of which we should be proud. But our organization is also vulnerable to the ever-changing tastes of the American public. I worked for nearly four decades as a newspaper reporter and editor, and now, that profession is endangered, thanks to the explosion of the Internet and social media. Nearly all of my friends with children of high-school age find that those youngsters have never picked up a newspaper. The smartphone and I Pad know all and tell all.

On top of that, these Gen X and Gen Y young people have likely never heard of Horatio Alger, let alone read any of his books. When I joined the Horatio Alger Society in 1983, most of the more senior members had joined in order to collect the books they had read as kids. Now, that generation is mostly gone, and our current members mainly know about Alger because of what their parents or grandparents experienced and read.

Obviously, I'm preaching to the choir. Reading and collecting juvenile fiction written between the mid-19th century and the 1970s is becoming harder and harder, due to our changing society and the relative unavailability of these old books (despite eBay!).

When I was in seventh or eighth grade, I was able to go to the Plaza Book Store on lower Broadway in Albany, New York, and buy Tom Swifts and Don Sturdys for 25 cents apiece. That store was gone by the late 1960s, and today there are few, if any, better quality brick-and-mortar used-book stores that carry the kind of stuff we collect. Many medium-sized cities no longer have even one good used-book store. The owners (if still living) have transferred their business to the Internet.

But our hobby is not the only one that is in recession. In a recent issue of **Antique Week**, published out of Knightstown, Indiana, columnist Barbara Miller Beem discusses the decline of membership in various collector clubs, covering this topic in great detail. An excerpt:

"We all understand the challenges of aging memberships, and recognizing that no one is at fault here, we accept that there's nothing that can be done about that. The real dilemma is how to attract new members.

"Years ago, I attended a day-long out-of-state seminar, a forum for collectors, dealers and show promoters as well as other interested parties. What we hoped to accomplish was to identify why the antique industry

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President's column

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wonders of travel like these books.

I thought I would briefly give an overview of the genre of the oversized travelogue series books of the 19th century.

The preeminent series in the travelogue area was the **Zig-Zag Series** written by Hezekiah Butterworth. Dana Estes of Estes & Lauriat in Boston approached Butterworth and asked him if he could write similar books to the ones authored by Rodolphe Topffer. Topffer's *Voyages en Zig-Zag* was first published in France in 1844 and the sequel was *Nouveaux Voyages En Zig-zag*. The Topffer books chronicled the adventure of a school teacher and his students as they "zigzagged" throughout various lands.

Butterworth agreed to write the Zig-Zag books and went on to pen 18 yearly titles beginning with *Zig-Zag Journeys in Europe*, published in the fall of 1879. By the time the third book had been published, 50,000 copies had been sold. Amazing, considering the \$1.75 to \$2.50 price tag.

Building on its success, the Estes and Lauriat firm added the the nine-volume **Knockabout Series** by Frederick Ober, beginning in 1881. The 11-title **Three Vassar Girls Series**, written by Elizabeth Champney, debuted in 1883.

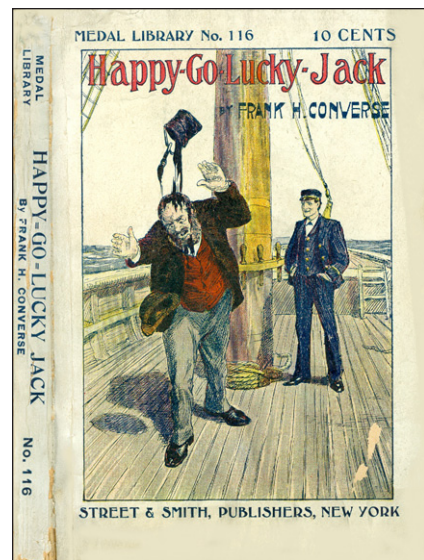
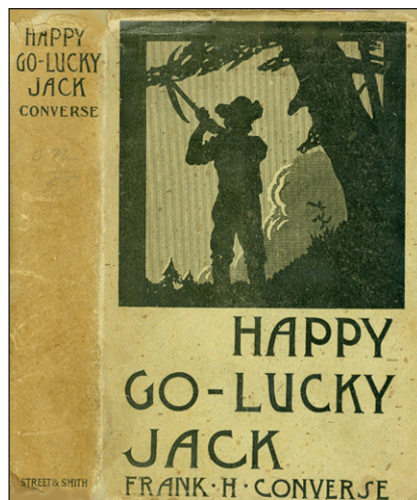
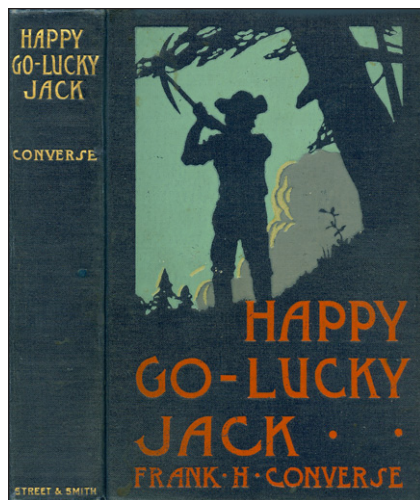
Although the Zigzag books were the most popular, they were certainly not the first of their genre. Horace Scudder, the editor of **The Atlantic Monthly**, wrote the "Bodley Books," in which Mr. Bodley documents adventures in America and abroad between 1875 and 1880 in a five-book series published by Hurd & Houghton of New York and its successors. Remember also that regular-sized books of travel adventures were quite common beginning in the 1850s with the Rollo books by Jacob Abbott. These latter efforts, though, did not have the illustrations and were replete with the moralistic drivel of the era.

D. Lothrop & Company of Boston got into the action with the five volume **Family Flight Series**. The first volume was published in 1881. These books followed the adventures of the Homer family in the northeastern corridor of the United States. They were written by the Rev. E. E. Hale and his daughter, Susan Hale.

Thomas Knox wrote the two volume **Young Nimrod Series**. Volume one was published in 1881. Harper and Brothers did this series.

The two volume **Lighthouse Children Series** by Mary Bradford Crowninshield was published by Lo-

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The Street & Smith Boys' Own Library hard-cover edition (dust jacket, center) and the S&S Medal Library edition of Frank Converse's *Happy-Go-Lucky Jack*.

Editor's notebook

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has difficulties attracting younger collectors, and then to work together to find ways to remedy the situation. To the best of my knowledge, not much came of the venture (except for some free pens distributed among the attendees). The group could not seem to decide what the next step should be."

I will make photocopies of this column to pass out at our convention in June in Shelbyville, where this topic (already discussed by President Cary Sternick in one of his *Newsboy* columns last summer), will certainly be front and center at our Board of Directors meeting. Maybe we can go beyond "preaching to the choir."

Street & Smith's Boys' Own Library revisited

Above, I show a comparison between the hard-cover version of Street & Smith's **Boys' Own Library** issue of Frank H. Converse's *Happy-Go-Lucky Jack*, along with the very rare dust jacket (using uncoated white paper), alongside the S&S **Medal Library** version of that title (No. 116, released on June 1, 1901).

In my article on the **Boys' Own Library** in the September-October 2013 *Newsboy* (including many full-color images), I mention that the hard-cover version was first advertised in **Publishers Weekly** on Sept. 25, 1901.

Why S&S sold 10-cent paperbacks and 75-cent hard-cover editions at about the same time has always been curious. But they were targeting different audiences, selling the cheaper Medal Libraries at corner newsstands and the hardcovers at upscale department stores.

MEMBERSHIP

New members

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'Bears of Blue River'

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hotel that you are with the Horatio Alger Society or mention code "HAS" to ensure that you receive the special convention rate of \$109. This rate includes free wireless, newspaper, and an excellent Continental breakfast and will apply for your entire stay including preceding and following dates. Please note that the block of rooms held for our use will expire on May 6th.

We will have several schedule updates in the March-April *Newsboy* (including our annual awards banquet) and will also post this information to the Horatio Alger Society website and Facebook page.

Wendy and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at the 2019 "Bears of Blue River" convention!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Linda and Arthur Smitter at the 2017 H.A.S. convention in Sacramento, California. Photo by Barry Schoenborn

Dear Bill,

I am letting you know that after 24 years as a member of the Horatio Alger Society, I will not be renewing my membership again. I also have sent notification to Bob Sipes.

I joined primarily to purchase Horatio Alger books, and after attending many conventions over the years have a very large collection, including one of the very few complete sets of Polyglot reprints. Linda and I have attended many very memorable conventions. Several that come to mind include Salt Lake City, Houston, Annapolis, Ottawa (Ontario), Charlottesville and many others. We had some very good speakers — Dick Wolfsie (Shelbyville in 2007) comes to mind, as well as “Edgar Allan Poe” in Indianapolis. Some not so good.

Special thanks to you, Bill, for all that you do for the H.A.S. You do an excellent job on the newsletter as well as all you do at the conventions.

Over the years, we have lost many of our Partic’lar Friends to old age and death, and that has been difficult.

Linda and I have many other interests to keep us occupied in our well-deserved retirement. I am glad for the many years as a member of the H.A.S. and wish the Society well for many years in the future.

Sincerely,
Your Partic’lar Friend,
Arthur Smitter (PF-952)
2959 Coral Valley Drive, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

President’s column

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throp in 1886 and 1887. The travel sites are the coastline of Maine and Europe. I believe the highlight of this relatively unknown series is the title of the second book: *The Ignoramuses*.

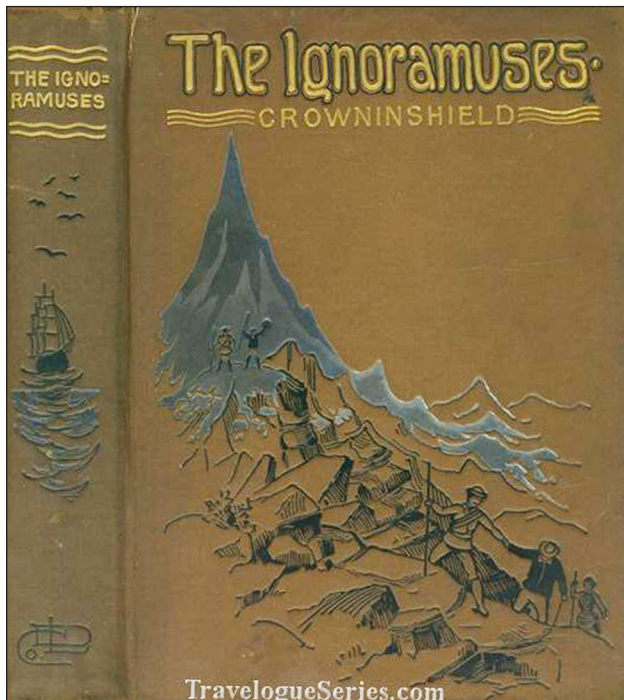
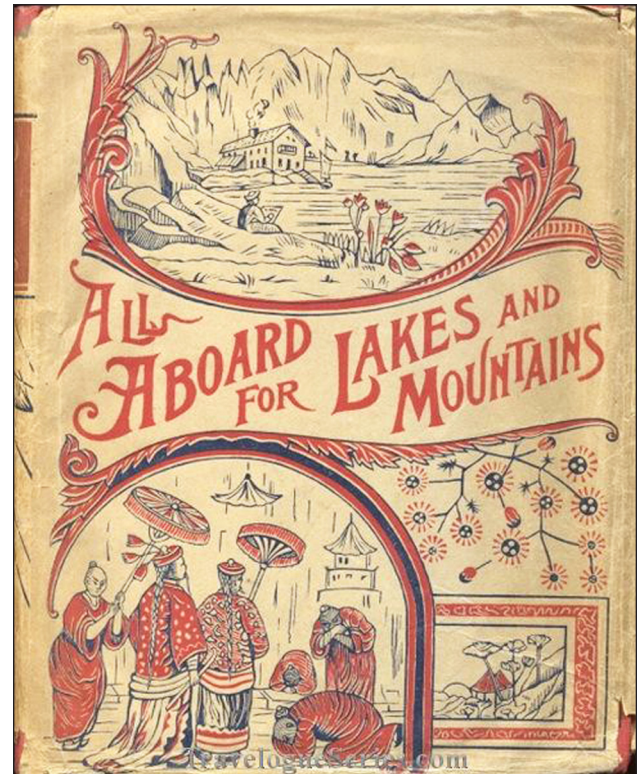
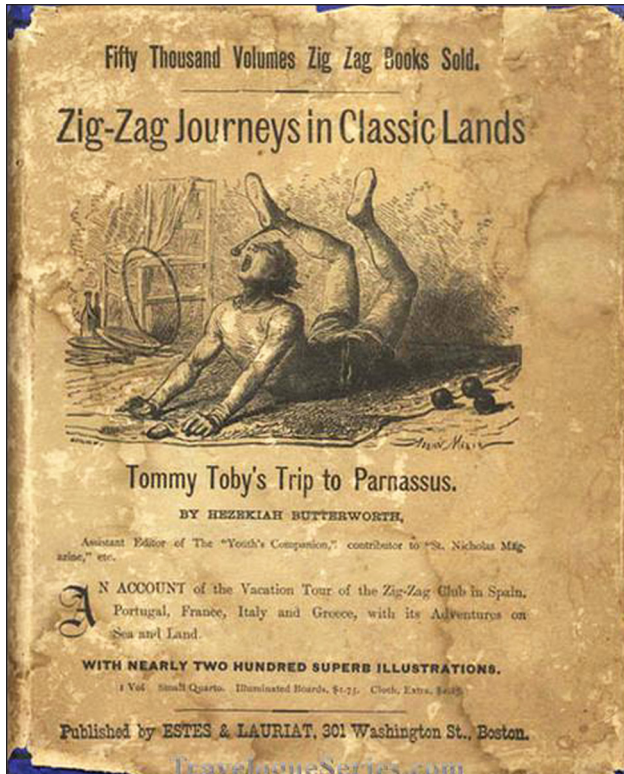
From a publishing history standpoint, by far the most interesting of all the oversized travelogue books is the **All Aboard Series**. This series published by Donohue, Henneberry & Co. of Chicago (followed by Donohue Brothers and even later by M. A. Donohue & Co.) is a combination of two two-book series.

The first two-title series was written by Edward A. Rand. The two books were first published by D. Lothrop & Company in 1881 (*All Aboard for Sunrise Lands*) and in 1883 (*All Aboard for Lakes and Mountains*). Thereafter, they were published as subscription books by a number of companies, including William M. Farrar, Chicago; Fairbanks, Palmer & Co., Chicago; R. S. Peale, St. Louis; Occidental Publishing Co., San Francisco; Pennsylvania Publishing House, Harrisburg, Pa.; and Oriental Publishing Company.

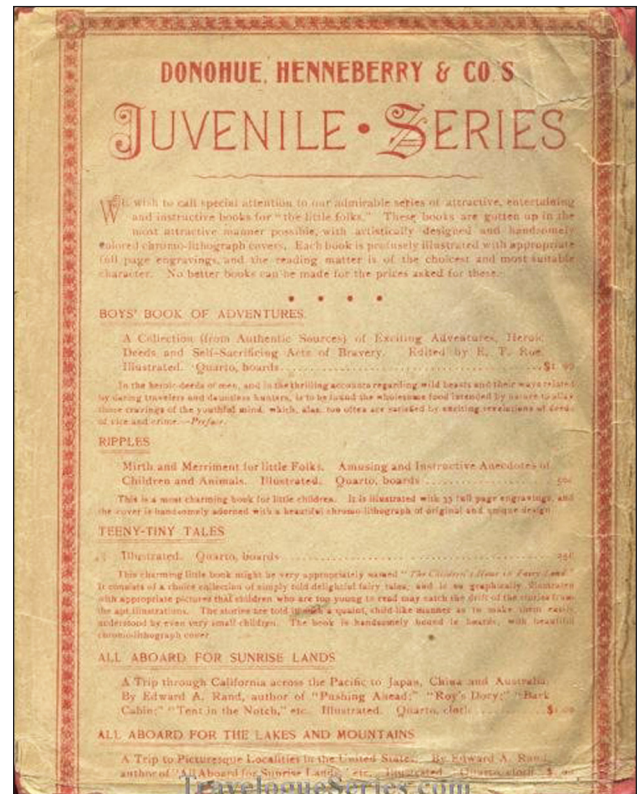
Finally, in 1891 Donohue, Henneberry & Co. published the two Rand books and in 1897 added the two-book Daniel Eddy-authored series. Eddy’s two books were originally called the **Rip Van Winkle Travel Books** (in Asia and Africa-1882, in Europe-1881) and later they were noted as the **Van Wert Series**. Publishers of the Eddy series included Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. (first editions), Belford, Clarke & Co.; L.P. Miller & Co., Chicago; Morrill, Higgins & Co. and Charles E. Brown & Co., Boston.

The series noted above were the most popular of the travelogue books but there are quite a number of series not described above. What the series here have in common is that the volumes are oversized and most were published in both boards and cloth simultaneously. The elegant clothbound books were very expensive for the time, costing in most instances \$2.50. As a collector I appreciate that they had dust jackets and the dealer comment “none, as issued” is off the mark. Of course, after collecting these books for what seems a lifetime, I have only seen a couple of dust jacketed copies. They are shown on Page 7.

Your Partic’lar Friend,
Cary Sternick (PF-933)
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The Ignoramuses is the second of two titles in Mary Bradford Crowninshield's Lighthouse Children's Series, published by D. Lothrop in 1886-87.



Howard M. Brier's Barry Martin 'Skycraft' Series

By David Kirk Vaughan (PF-831)
(First of two parts)

Howard M. Brier's three-volume aviation series describes the activities of Barry Martin, a young test pilot who works for the Hamlin Aircraft Company in Seattle, Washington. The three titles are *Skycruiser* (1939), *Skyfreighter* (1942) and *Skyblazer* (1946). All titles were published by Random House.

The central focus of all three books is the testing and acceptance of new cargo aircraft. Given the similarities of their titles I refer to these books as being part of the **Skycraft series**. This term is my invention, as no phrase linking the titles was generated by the publisher other than the name of the central character and the fact that each title began with the prefix "Sky..."

The probable reason for a lack of an overall series title is that the series happened accidentally; that is, there was no set plan for writing the books as a series, as was the case with most of the Stratemeyer Syndicate publications. All three books are well above the average quality of typical aviation series.



Howard M. Brier

who thoroughly researched the background of the situations and individuals in his stories. James Stevens, author of some of the best books about mythical logger Paul Bunyan, and a fellow Pacific Northwest writer, praised Brier's "... ability to keep a story sailing while citing educational items about the passing scenes and people" in the stories.

Born in Wisconsin on March 20, 1903, Howard M. Brier was raised in Everett, Washington, originally a lumber town north of Seattle. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1925 and started



working as a reporter for local papers. His reportorial work enabled him to become familiar with a variety of professions, and his experiences as a reporter served as the basis for his stories and books. He published many stories in *Open Road*, *Boys' Life* and *American Boy*. Almost all of the books that he wrote were intended for teen-age readers and were designed to introduce them to the challenges and tasks of a variety of occupations. His first published book, *Waterfront Beat* (1937), described the activities of workers along Seattle's shipping and dock areas. After *Skycruiser* was published in 1939, his next book was *Smoke Eater* (1941), about firefighters. *Swing Shift* (1943) described life in a shipbuilding factory during World War II, and *Fighting Heart* (1954) described firefighting activities. In the 1940s and 1950s he wrote several sports novels for boys. His only book intended for adult readers was *Sawdust Empire* (1958), a history of the logging industry in the Northwest.

After his time as a reporter, Brier taught high school in the Seattle area; he received his master's degree from the University of Washington and joined the journalism faculty at UW, where he taught until his

death in Seattle in 1969. During World War II, Brier joined the "Keep Washington Green" group, serving as its assistant director under Stewart Holbrook and then as its director. He was heavily involved in journalism education in the northwest, serving as director of the Pacific Slope Press, which provided seminars for high school journalism teachers.

All stories in the **Skycraft series** begin in the Seattle-based aircraft manufacturing plant of the Starwing Airplane Company, whose president is Porter J. Hamlin. The Starwing Airplane Company initially builds a variety of aircraft, including training and other light aircraft, but it eventually specializes in larger aircraft designed to carry passengers and cargo.

The obvious model for the fictional Starwing Company is the Boeing Aircraft Company, founded by William Boeing in Seattle in 1916. In its first three decades it built a wide variety of military and civilian aircraft, including the Boeing B-17 and B-29 four-engine bombers of World War II.

After the war, the company specialized in larger bomber and cargo aircraft for the military and expanded its work for the commercial airlines into the jet age. By the time Brier wrote the first Barry Martin title in 1939, Boeing had successfully built floatplanes (the B-1), fighters (P-12), mail planes (Model 40) and airliners (Model 247). Each volume of the series features a single aircraft as the focal point of the action.

Although the aircraft of the Boeing Aircraft Company often provide the inspiration for Brier's stories, the Starwing Company is not a cloned version of the company, as Brier occasionally mentions the Boeing Company as one of Starwing's competitors in the commercial aircraft market.

Skycruiser

The first title in the series, *Skycruiser*, is a collection of stories, many of which were previously published in publications intended for boys, that are stitched together by the thread of attempts by agents from a competing

aircraft company to obtain Hamlin's plans for his new aircraft design. The new aircraft that Hamlin hoped to build, the Skycruiser, was a "giant flying boat" with six 1,500-horsepower engines, a wingspan of 325 feet, and a duralumin frame. The aircraft, as he envisioned it, would weigh over 100 tons, would require a crew of 16, and would carry 150 passengers in three decks of passenger compartments.

It is likely that Brier took as his inspiration a 1938 illustration that the Boeing Company created in response to a request for a new improved flying boat from Pan American Airways. The design was a

development of the Boeing 314 Clipper, a large flying boat that first flew in 1938. Pan American Airlines used many Boeing 314 aircraft in its transatlantic and transpacific flights. The Boeing 314 had four engines and could carry between 40 and 90 passengers, depending on the distance to be flown. Boeing never built a flying boat as large as that envisioned in this 1938 illustration. Nor did the Starwing Company.

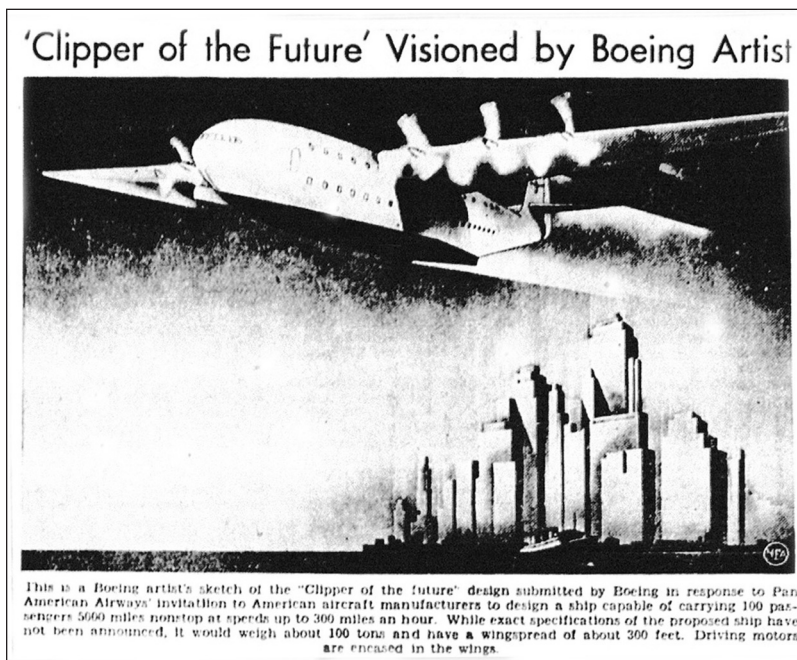
In *Skycruiser*, only the aircraft's plans

and a model are created, not the aircraft itself. News of Hamlin's flying boat have leaked out, and a former Starwing test pilot, Deat Proctor, employs a variety of methods to steal Hamlin's plans.

Hamlin hires Barry Martin as a junior test pilot after he substitutes at the last minute for the original pilot, who has fallen ill. Hamlin takes an immediate liking to Barry and shows him around the Starwing facilities at Hamlin Field.

The other Starwing test pilots, Steve Cline and Tiny Hooper, are at first doubtful about Barry's flying ability, because he had "washed out" of the U. S. Navy's pre-flight school at Sand Point, a Navy flying field in Seattle. But by the end of the first book they accept him as one of the team. After Barry demonstrates his competence by flying a more accurate flight test profile on another

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This Boeing conceptual sketch of a large flying boat (never built) was a likely inspiration for Howard M. Brier's *Skycruiser*.

'Skycraft' Series

(Continued from Page 9)

Starwing aircraft than another pilot had achieved, Hamlin invites Barry to his island home in the San Juan Islands, north of Seattle, where he reveals to Barry his ideas for the Skycruiser.

In general, Brier describes test pilot procedures, activities, and experiences well; only occasionally does he demonstrate an inaccurate understanding of pilot procedures. The only instance when Brier appears to be unaware of standard aviation practice occurs when he says that Barry Martin flies to altitudes of 16,000 feet without reliance on supplemental oxygen. Even prior to World War II, pilots knew that flights above 10,000 feet without supplemental oxygen could result in hypoxia, or loss of consciousness. World War I pilots in their open cockpit biplanes rarely flew at altitudes at or above 16,000 feet, because they were well aware that their performance suffered as a result.

In this book, as in the later two titles in the series, Brier makes a special effort to depict the technical aspects involved in designing, building and testing new aircraft. Early in the book, Porter Hamlin shows Barry through the varied facilities of the Starwing Company, including the engineering, auditing, inspection and production departments, along with a variety of shops: the welding, sheet metal, machine, die-making, wood, and finishing shops. Brier provides a brief description of the activities that occur in each of these shops. In 1938, when Brier was writing the stories that provide the basis of *Skycruiser*, test pilot activities were very much in the news. One of Hollywood's more popular movies, "Test Pilot," starring Clark Gable, Myrna Loy and Spencer Tracy, appeared that year.

Barry Martin participates in a variety of flying challenges in *Skycruiser*. In one episode he flies a Starwing aircraft in "rough weather" to rescue an ailing boy whose father is doubtful about the reliability of the aircraft. After Barry Martin rescues the man's son by landing the aircraft on a beach, he changes his mind and buys the aircraft. Then, Barry assists in flying an older version of a Starwing aircraft from Seattle to an interior location in British Columbia. This is a flight of some risk, as it covers a long distance into rugged Canadian territory. The individual to whom they deliver the airplane requests that Barry fly deeper into the mountains to pick up some injured men and some silver ore. When Barry does so successfully, the mine owner is impressed with the aircraft and, although it is of an older design, he orders five more.



Barry's next challenge is to fly an unusual aircraft with a pusher engine, an engine located behind the pilot's cockpit. As Barry is flying the aircraft, he is almost overcome with carbon monoxide fumes in the cockpit. However, he is able to land the aircraft safely. Afterward, he learns that the aircraft engine had a cracked exhaust manifold and was feeding exhaust fumes into the cockpit.

Barry then assists in an air show race in Spokane, Washington, although he does not fly any of the aircraft involved in the race. This episode was undoubtedly based on an historical event when, in September of 1927, an air show was held at Felts Field in Spokane with Charles Lindbergh in attendance. No subsequent air shows of this magnitude were held in Spokane after Lindbergh's visit.

Barry's next challenge is to fly a prospective buyer on a round-trip flight from Seattle to Spokane and back after he initially decides not to purchase any of Hamlin's latest passenger aircraft. When Barry lands the aircraft in Seattle in low visibility using the aircraft's latest instrument flying equipment, the individual is sufficiently impressed with the aircraft's all-weather capabilities that he purchases 10 aircraft.

In his next test flight, Barry is forced to bail out of a flawed Hamlin aircraft when its engine catches fire; in this story Brier shows how the parachute is essential for

pilot safety. His final challenge is to help a fellow pilot recover from a dangerous situation when, flying as a co-pilot on a test flight, he releases a stuck mechanism on an aircraft aileron that enables the aircraft to fly safely again. In the extended concluding episode of the book, Barry helps Porter Hamlin escape from his island home in the Puget Sound when they are attacked by Deat Proctor's men, who want to steal Hamlin's plans for the Skycruiser.

Skyfreighter

In *Skyfreighter*, published in 1942, Brier significantly modifies the plan of story development that he used in *Skycruiser*. Instead of creating a narrative based on a series of shorter, relatively disconnected episodes in which Barry Martin flies a variety of aircraft unrelated to the central focus of the eventual book, in *Skyfreighter* Barry flies the same aircraft throughout: the Skyfreighter, a twin-engine cargo Starwing aircraft with twin tails, which Hamlin designates the S-29.

Although the Skycruiser aircraft in the first volume is approximately based on the imaginative sketch of a proposed Boeing flying boat aircraft, the Skyfreighter is not based on any Boeing design. Instead, it shows aeronautical characteristics that are strikingly similar to the Beech Aircraft Model 18, a twin-engine, twin tail aircraft that was first produced in 1937. This popular aircraft remained in production for over 30 years. It was used as a navigation trainer and small cargo aircraft by the Army Air Forces in World War II.

The Beech Model 18 was a versatile aircraft that could be fitted with floats to land on water, a feature that it demonstrates in *Skyfreighter*. In the book, the S-29 is a cargo aircraft which hauls supplies to the remote mining camps of northern Canada. The appearance of the aircraft is shown in the many illustrations which are featured throughout the story.



The Beech Model 18, above, and artist Willard Ros-enquist's illustration, at right, of the similar Hamlin Model 29, from Chapter 13 of *Skyfreighter*.

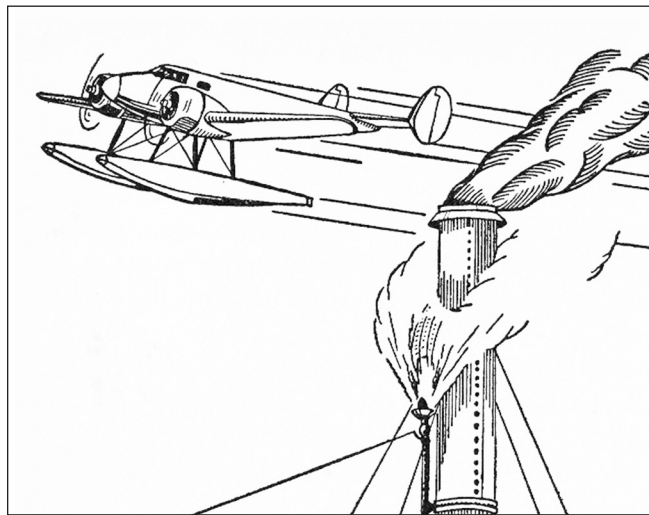
As the story opens, Porter Hamlin is expecting a visitor from Canada who is interested in purchasing the S-29 for use in his airline operation, Arctic Airways. Although the company is receiving many orders for bombers, it is not selling as many aircraft designed for civilian use. America is not yet involved in the war, and although Hamlin is pleased to have many orders for military aircraft, Hamlin wants to make and sell civilian cargo planes as well.

The president of Arctic Airways, Peter Bartlett, pays an unannounced visit to the Hamlin factory, and, not realizing who he is, Barry Martin shows him around the plant. As a result of Barry Martin's hospitality, Bartlett purchases six aircraft and requests that Barry fly the S-29 in Canada for a six-month period, serving as an instructor for the Arctic Airways pilots who will be flying the aircraft. Hamlin tells Barry that Bartlett is an experienced Canadian explorer and miner and owns the Good Hope Radium Mines, located on the shores of the Great Bear Lake, as well as Arctic Airways. Brier may have based the character of Peter Bartlett on Charles LaBine, who owned the Eldorado Gold Mines, located at Great Bear Lake.

As Barry Martin nervously waits for the final testing of the S-29 to be completed, he and fellow pilots Meader and Steve Cline discuss the hazards of flying in the far Canadian north. They mention Wiley Post and Will Rogers, who died when their aircraft crashed after takeoff at Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15, 1935.

When they enter the hangar where two of the S-29 aircraft are kept, they are attacked by three unknown assailants. Steve Cline is badly knifed, and Barry is knocked unconscious in the fight. One of the assailants leaves his knife behind. The weapon is of an unusual design, with a series of numbers and letters marked

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into the blade. It is clearly a code of some kind, but it is meaningless to Barry and the others. They determine that the intruders have almost completely disabled the two aircraft in the hangar. When Hamlin communicates the news about the incident to Peter Bartlett, Bartlett suggests that the attackers may have been part of a group that has been trying to sabotage his Canadian mining operation.

While Hamlin has his workers make a special effort to repair the aircraft, they are visited by Jim Bartlett, Peter Bartlett's son; he is also a pilot who will be flying the S-29 for Arctic Airways. Barry Martin shows him around the hangar and identifies the engine that powers the aircraft as the Wright 760-E-2 seven-cylinder engine. This particular engine first appeared in 1935, and according to modern information could develop only 320 horsepower, so when Barry states that the engines could produce "700 horsepower on takeoff and 420 horsepower while cruising at 11,000 feet," he must be talking about the power that both engines combined could produce. The engine was air-cooled, so it would have performed well in the cold air of northern Canada. However, as far as can be determined, the Wright 760-E-2 was used only on single engine aircraft, not on twin engine aircraft.

In this section, Brier provides realistic descriptions of the demands that would be placed on aircraft operating in cold climates, including the difficulty of starting the engines at sub-zero temperatures, when "plumbers' pots" (a miniature furnace designed to melt solder for plumbers in very cold temperatures) would be required to warm the engine prior to its start. Before Barry leaves for Canada, Hamlin gives him some advice on the adjustments necessary to live "down north," such as the need to be self-sufficient and self-motivated.

Barry and Jim Bartlett depart in an S-29, flying first

to Vancouver, where "Dad" Bartlett will join them for the flight to Edmonton. On the way to Vancouver, Jim tells Barry about the on-going feud between his father and Steff Regan, which began when they fought over mining claims. Jim believes that the men who disabled the S-29s were working for Regan. When they land in Vancouver they are surprised to see Steff Regan accompanying Dad Bartlett for the flight to Edmonton. Barry and Jim fly a direct course from Vancouver to Edmonton, crossing over the mountains that constitute Jasper National Park. When they land at Edmonton, Barry meets several of Dad Bartlett's employees, including "Slappy," a small, dynamic individual from Brooklyn who has cultivated a fake British accent.

Barry discovers that Dad Bartlett has reserved a suite for him at the MacDermott Hotel, the most impressive hotel in town. Brier must have had the

MacDonald Hotel as his model for the MacDermott.

As he looks out from his seventh-floor hotel window, Barry reflects on the role of aviation in the Canadian north. He reflects that Edmonton was a "hearty city, a city with a future, and to one who was air-minded like Barry—to one who visioned the globe crisscrossed with



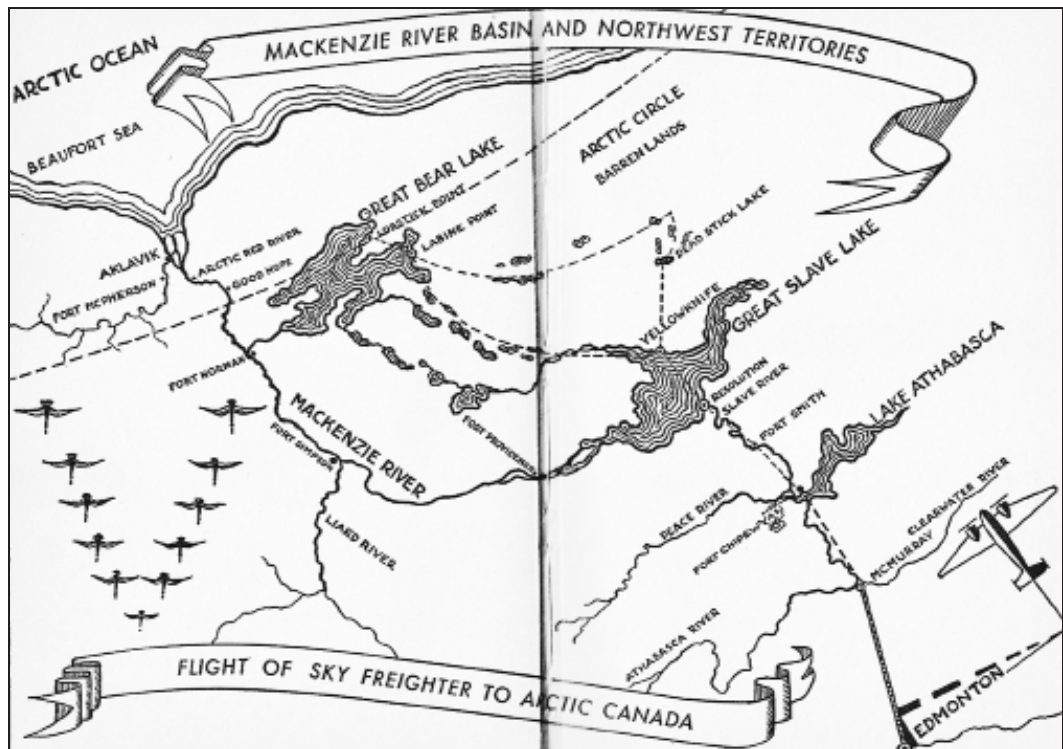
Early postcard view of the MacDonal Hotel in Edmonton, Canada.

great circle air routes — Edmonton was an important junction. The day would come, Barry knew, when regularly scheduled planes would carry passengers from New York to Edmonton, and on to Fairbanks, Alaska" (101).

After enjoying a steak dinner, Barry walks the streets of Edmonton, past the new Hudson's Bay Company store, and he decides that "... there was room to spread out in Edmonton, no need for towering skyscrapers in this prairie city. Here business concerns grew horizontally instead of vertically" (103). When he returns to his hotel room he finds an unsigned note suggesting that he return to Seattle or else he will "regret" staying in Edmonton.

The following Monday, Barry begins his travels designed to familiarize him with the flying routes of

northern Canada. Brier (or, rather, his artist) provides a detailed map that shows the key points of travel. Barry and Jim Bartlett ride a train from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, where they are to fly a plane back to Edmonton. The plane, a single-engine Noorduyn Norseman, is flown in by Thad Fisk, a rough, crude, experienced pilot. They fly the Norseman back to Edmonton, and when Barry returns to his hotel room he finds that it has been thoroughly searched and the knife with the



coded message has been taken. When he reports the theft of the knife to Dad Bartlett, Bartlett tells him the story of Rabbit MacIvy, a prospector who was found murdered. The knife was his, and Bartlett is certain the coded message on the knife contains information about the location of a vein of ore that MacIvy was bringing to Bartlett when he was murdered.

When the floats are attached to the S-29, Barry and Jim Bartlett fly a short test flight from the Arctic Airways seaplane base on the North Saskatchewan River, which flows through Edmonton. The seaplane base is located at a "sharp bend in the river," where they can "land upstream from two directions, depending on the wind" (141). The directions provided in the book suggest that this location is near the modern Gold Bar Park. As they are about to depart for the far north with a load of supplies, Dad Bartlett arrives; he tells Barry that he wishes he were going with them because of his "liking [for] the country." He warns Barry not to "let the north get into [his] blood," because if it does, "you're lost, hopelessly lost," and that "you'll want to go back again and again. It does something to you. It pulls you like a magnet, and it takes a lot of will power to resist" (143).

As they depart, they bank over nearby Cooking Lake, which is used as a seaplane base when conditions are not suitable for landing on the river.

Their route of flight takes them to Fort McMurray and along the Athabasca River to Fort Chipewyan,

and then along the Slave River to Fort Smith. As they fly over the Canadian north, Barry "could feel the immensity of the land that lay ahead. It was a limitless land, a mysterious land, a timeless land" (147). As they fly, Jim tells Barry the Indian legend of Little Beaver and his magic arrow. This tale takes up four pages of the book (152-55). Their five-hour flight from Edmonton ends as they land on the Slave River near Fort Smith; they have now left the province of Alberta and are now in the Northwest Territories. As these excerpts suggest, in *Skyfreighter* Brier incorporates a strong sense of the significant impact the territories of the far north have on the men who live there.

At Fort Smith they meet Thad Fisk, who rides with them to Yellowknife. As Barry's familiarity with Thad Fisk grows, so do his suspicions. Even when Fisk tells him about numerous men arriving in the area, evidently intended to interfere with Dad Bartlett's mining operations, Barry is not confident that Fisk is someone who can be trusted. When Fisk tells him that there might be "war in the north," Barry is more concerned than ever. His suspicions increase the next morning, when he walks along the shores of the Great Slave Lake, where he sees squaw ducks, sandpipers, and bitterns. He also observes an unmarked black Waco biplane set down on the waters near Yellowknife, and someone who looks like Thad Fisk rows out to meet it.

The next morning, Barry and Jim continue their flight to

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the Great Bear Lake. During their three-hour trip they fly over "... thousands of ponds, unnamed and uncharted," which gave "... the broad expanse the appearance of having been through some torrent or cloudburst of inconceivable proportions" (179). As they fly over the desolate territory, Barry thinks that their aircraft is like a space ship flying over an uninhabited world: "The land below was a strange planet, and the center of life in all this void was concentrated within the narrow confines of the plane's cabin" (180-81). Jim Bartlett says that this territory "gets under your skin ... You don't know it's there until you get back home and start living the humdrum life you have always lived" (184).

They land near Labine point, where Dad Bartlett's Good Hope Mine is located, and offload supplies for the men who are working there. Jim gives Barry a tour of the facilities of the Good Hope Mine, including the power plant and the rock-crushing areas. While they are involved in their activities, Thad Fisk disappears. The following morning they fly a short distance to Radium City, where they refuel the aircraft.

They then return to the Good Hope Mine, where they load one of the power plant dynamos which they will fly to Edmonton for repair. Loading the large and heavy dynamo on the S-29 is a major challenge: they have to strip the interior of the aircraft to reduce weight and to increase the interior area. They also are forced to limit the fuel they take on board. In an accurate and realistic touch, Brier describes how the weight of the dynamo causes the floats of the aircraft to nearly submerge. In spite of the heavy load, they are finally able to take off.

However, as Barry flies the aircraft, he is unable to determine their position. Although he is flying the correct compass course, they appear to be off course. Too late, they realize that the heavy metal dynamo must have adversely affected the compass, which had been turning them in an easterly, instead of a southerly, heading. Because they have a reduced fuel load, they soon run out of fuel and are forced to land on an unknown lake. They are off the standard routes of travel, have no means of communication, and almost no food. As the days pass, the cold weather increases. While gathering wood for a fire, Barry slips and breaks his ankle.

They survive for 22 days and are about to perish when they are rescued by Starwing pilots Steve Cline and Meader, who have been sent from Seattle by

Hamlin, flying another S-29. This segment, depicting the harsh conditions in which Barry and Bartlett struggle to survive, is realistically described.

In Edmonton, a doctor sets Barry's broken ankle, and he is forced to rest while his ankle heals. Dad Bartlett tells Barry that he should remain in Edmonton, and when he recovers sufficiently he should provide instruction to Arctic Airways pilots who will be flying the S-29 aircraft. They learn that the Japanese threat in the Pacific has "intensified," so production of civilian Starwing aircraft has been curtailed. They also learn that Thad Fisk has gone to work for Steff Regan, flying the black Waco. In mid-November, the doctor removes his cast. As he is about to return to his flying duties, Barry receives a message from Jim Bartlett which says that he and his father have deciphered the code on the knife and have departed in a Norseman to investigate the location indicated in the message.

However, the Bartletts do not reveal their destination to anyone, and their plane disappears. A search is started for the missing plane, but their plane cannot be located. Barry despairs of providing any help until Slappy, an Arctic Airways worker, makes a comment that gives Barry an idea of how to interpret the code. When he deciphers the code he realizes the Bartletts are on an arm of the Great Bear Lake. He tells Slappy to prepare the S-29 for a long flight, and they take off in search of the Bartletts. It is now late November and the winter weather has started. Snow has started to fall, and Barry's S-29 is fitted with skis.

As they fly north, the snow begins to fall and the visibility is severely reduced. Eventually, Barry realizes he must fly above the weather, and he climbs to 8,000 feet. But he is above a solid deck of clouds and has no ground references. He is forced to rely on compass and clock. Slappy is able to make contact with Yellowknife on the radio and they let down through the clouds and land. They refuel at Yellowknife and depart for the Great Bear Lake. While looking for landmarks along the lake's shoreline, they see a large fire at the Good Hope Mine, caused by a burning bunkhouse. Slappy spots the last landmark, and they land and rescue the Bartletts.

They return to the Good Hope Mines, where they learn the fire was set by Steff Regan's men, including Thad Fisk. Jim Bartlett gathers his men and they fly the short distance to Radium City, where they confront and subdue Steff Regan, Thad Fisk, and their men.

As he did in *Skycruiser*, Barry successfully demonstrates that the newest Starwing aircraft is well suited to the cargo tasks for which it was designed.

(To be concluded in the March-April Newsboy)

BOOK REVIEW

Horatio Alger, Jr., edited by Jon Miller, Ph. D.: *From Canal Boy to President. The Boyhood and Manhood of James A. Garfield*. Special edition for students of The University of Akron as well as general readers. Akron, Ohio: ©2018, The University of Akron Press. 249 pages, with 13-page appendix specific to this edition. ISBN 978-1-629221-15-1. Paperback, price \$16, available at www.uakron.edu/uapress.

Reviewed by William R. Gowen (PF-706)

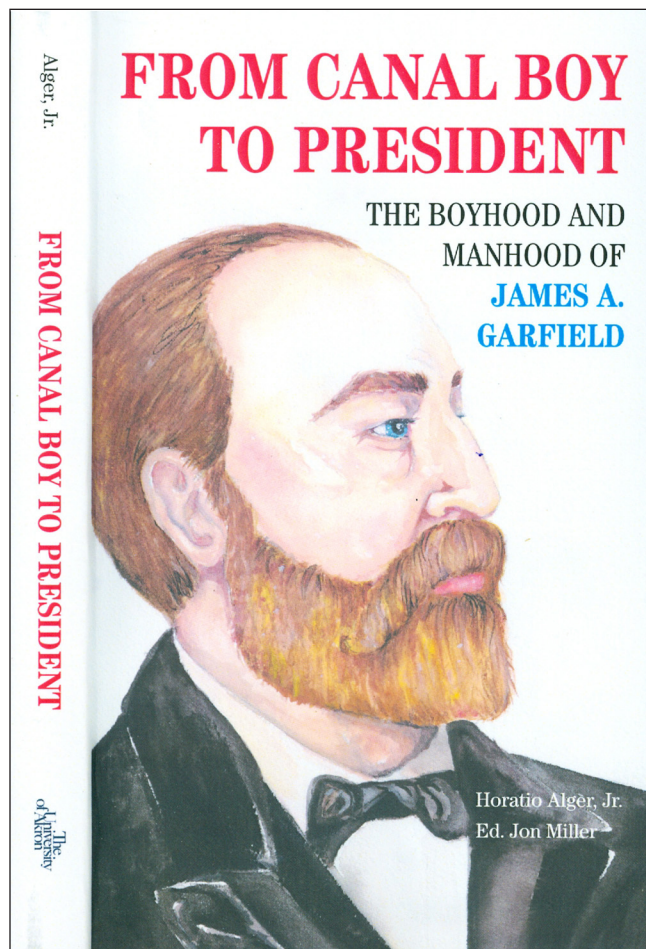
The Horatio Alger stories “we read as kids” are fading gradually into the background as those kids are no longer with us or, at best, two or three generations our elders. Today’s young people have myriad interests, and many have entered college not having any idea of who Horatio Alger was, or why his legacy of “strive and succeed” has become ingrained in the American culture.

In my recent *Newsboy* article on the contributions of artist and illustrator Norman Rockwell to early 20th century juvenile literature, I noted that he cited in his autobiography, *My Adventures as an Illustrator* (©1960, Macmillan Co.) his interest in Alger as a youth and his reading, in particular, *From Canal Boy to President* and *Phil, the Fiddler*. But Rockwell was growing up in New York in an era when Alger was a very popular author and young boys were avid readers.

So, it is with very great interest that The University of Akron Press has issued this reprint edition of said *From Canal Boy to President*, stating it is “for the use of the students of the University of Akron.” The book includes an appendix/study guide that expounds on the personal strengths of Garfield’s character as defined by Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*, described by the U. of Akron Press as “the standard of American dictionaries when *From Canal Boy to President* was first published” (in 1881).

Of course, this book, priced for \$16 from the above website, is available for everyone, not just students, although the latter should have a special interest in native Ohioan Garfield, one of seven future presidents born in that state. The others were Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, William Howard Taft and Warren G. Harding. McKinley, like Garfield, was an assassination victim.

In a recent issue of *Newsboy* (September-October 2018), Robert E. Kasper (PF-327) wrote an article describing how *From Canal Boy to President; or The Boyhood and Manhood of James A. Garfield*, made it to the public in amazing time following his death thanks to



Alger’s delivery of his manuscript to publisher John R. Anderson in about two weeks and the publisher’s creative direct marketing through book agents.

Obviously, Alger based much of his text on current news reports, but he had to do much additional research on the future president’s years growing up in Northeastern Ohio. The author created conversational dialogue to make this biography less pedantic, a common practice of the day.

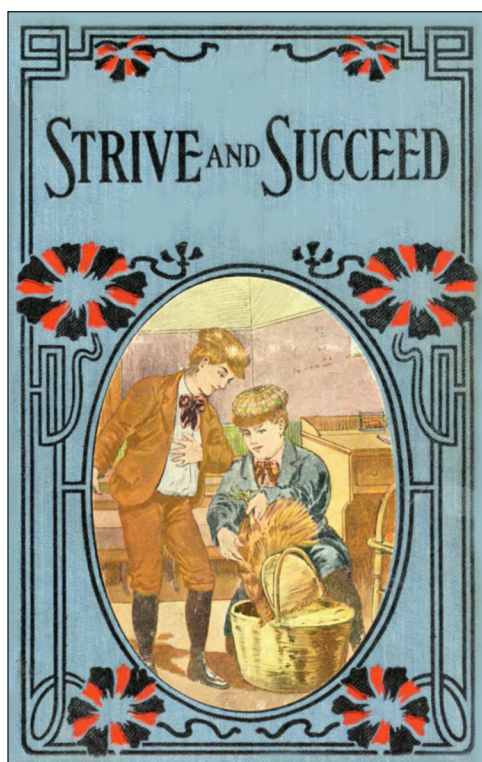
This “enhanced edition” (the publisher’s description) was edited by Dr. Jon Miller, director of the University of Akron Press. In an opening note, Miller says new topic-specific running heads have been created for each page and “the text follows the 1881 John R. Anderson & Company edition, with some updating to the formatting of quoted material.” This is done by removing the quotation marks from the more lengthy cited material and indenting those blocks of type to conform with current style.

This is a well-produced, reasonably priced edition of an Alger classic — and a note to fellow Alger collectors — there is no need for an erratum slip!

Strive and Succeed Award

*The Horatio Alger Society appreciates the generosity of its members in donating to the H.A.S. **Strive and Succeed Award** fund. The **Strive and Succeed Award** is presented each spring at the annual convention to a deserving high school senior to help defray his or her college expenses. The following Partic'lar Friends made contributions during calendar year 2018:*

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