



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 2

Final countdown to Shelbyville



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things to do in
the Hoosier State*

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BARRY MARTIN, Pilot

President's column

Good afternoon from Houston,

Last weekend was a special one because we are having our annual crawfish boil. We had about 40 people over to enjoy the 125 pounds of spicy mudbugs. For those not familiar with this kind of event, the live crawfish are boiled in a spicy broth with potatoes, sausage and corn. Shrimp can also be thrown in. After a few minutes, they are ready to eat. Although I had never heard of this sort of food event until I moved to Houston, I have to say that now this is a favorite yearly event for us. In fact, my daughter Lauren, who lives in New York and my son Aaron, who lives in Philadelphia, both flew in to partake.

Generally, a few people will wander into the first-floor library where I house many of my juvenile series books. The first question I get is "have you read all of these books?" Then they ask what are all of these books? The crowd is an older one and some have heard of Tom Swift or the Hardy Boys but rarely any others. Although I almost fell over when my neighbor said he used to read his father's Jerry Todds as a kid and was curious if I had any of those. I suspect in another 30 years or so, even the Tom Swifts and the Hardy Boys will be forgotten.

What really seemed to elicit a lot of interest were the posters that I have hanging up in various places. Ads of book publishers and broadsides of theatre plays and movies based on books were just some of the items that garnered extra looks. It got me to thinking about an area of collecting that is under-appreciated. That is, the ephemera of publishers and books.

Club membership items issued for the Seckatary Hawkins "Fair and Square" club, the Leo Edwards Freckled Goldfish club, etc. are relatively commonplace — these include buttons, membership cards, pennants, etc.

This ephemera came in all shapes and sizes. Flyers promoting authors, certain titles and/or publishers were very common in the 19th and early 20th century. There were trade cards that promoted various titles or publish-

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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 ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176.

The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send advertisements or "Letters to the Editor" to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

Final countdown to Shelbyville

By Bob Sipes (PF-1067)

We are looking forward to seeing each of you at the upcoming 2019 Horatio Alger "Bears of Blue River" convention in Shelbyville, Indiana, June 6-9. We welcome anyone who collects or researches children's series books, dime novels, story papers and related collectibles for a great time with fun and interesting people.

As I have discussed much of the convention details in the previous articles, this will focus on activities that you may be interested in outside of the convention. Shelbyville does have a few flea market/antique malls and there are many others close by. Exit 76 Antique Mall, the largest antique mall in Indiana and the Midwest is located on Interstate 65, approximately 20 miles southwest of Shelbyville. Featured are many display booths filled with books at this mall and there is good turnover of content. A list of Indiana bookstores and antique malls will be provided for all attendees along with additional Indiana tourism information.

Approximately eight miles southeast of Shelbyville is the Meltzer Historical Farm and Meltzer Woods. The Meltzer Farm does not have tours and much of it is not open to the public as it is still occupied by the family today, but you are able to view the historic farm cabin which is approximately 150 years old. Close by is the Meltzer Woods Natural Preserve, which has been designated a National Natural Landmark. There are trails for walking and some interesting old growth trees, some as old as 400 years.

Just a short drive from the Meltzer Woods is Moscow, Indiana home to the Moscow covered bridge. Interestingly, the original bridge, constructed in 1886, was completely destroyed by a tornado in 2008. It was rebuilt following the original design by E. L. Kennedy using 40 per cent original salvaged timbers.

The Red Mills grist mill was built in 1821 and is one of the oldest grist mills in the state. It is not always open but still affords a great photo opportunity near Boggstown, Indiana, which interestingly passed a secession resolution in 1861 that has never been repealed.

You can also find unique and interesting examples of architecture throughout downtown Shelbyville and on drives throughout the county. The John Hamilton house, built in 1853 and located in Shelbyville's West Historic District, was added to the National Register

of Historic Places in 1979. Another prominent example is the George Rudicel Polygonal Barn, a unique 12-sided barn located in Noble Township in Shelby County. It was built in 1910 and added to the National Register in 1993.

As the whole world knows, May is Race Month in Indiana with the running of the Indianapolis 500 on Memorial Day weekend. While the race will be over and no cars running dur-



The Kopper Kettle Inn in Morristown, Indiana, will be the site of the convention's Friday dinner on June 7.

ing the convention, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is open to the public during this time for you to tour. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum is both interesting and entertaining and highly recommended.

Downtown Indianapolis is just 30 minutes from the convention hotel and offers many attractive activities such as the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians & Western Art, the Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum located in the lower level of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument standing as the centerpiece of Indianapolis, the Indiana State Museum, the Indiana Transportation Museum, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art among many others. For additional information, please visit <http://visitindy.com/> and www.nps.gov/nr/travel/indianapolis/listofsites.htm.

A registration form is included in this issue, along with the schedule of events, and you may also register via the Horatio Alger Society website. Hotel reserva-

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Editor's notebook

We're in the home stretch before the 55th annual convention, "Bears of Blue River," to be hosted by Bob and Wendy Sipes in Shelbyville, Indiana, on June 6th to 9th. In case you are among those "on the fence," and haven't decided to attend, this is a reminder that there's still time! Bob has obtained a one-week extension of our special group rate of \$109 per night at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Shelbyville, now Monday, May 13. That means you may be reading this near or on that date, so pick up the phone and make your reservation now.

Most of the convention information was included with the previous *Newsboy*, mailed the last week of January, so you should have the registration form and schedule of events already in hand. However, additional copies are included with this issue.

Series bibliography updates: Way back in the mid-1990s, Bart Nyberg (PF-879) and I did yeomen's work in researching newly discovered series as well as additions and corrections to Ed Mattson and Tom Davis' monumental *A Collector's Guide to Hardcover Boys' Series Books*. The Mattson and Davis guide was a much-needed update to the late Harry Hudson's revised version of his own pioneering bibliography. Over several years, Bart and I sent numerous emails and other correspondence to Ed and Tom, with the "Big Red Book" released in 1997.

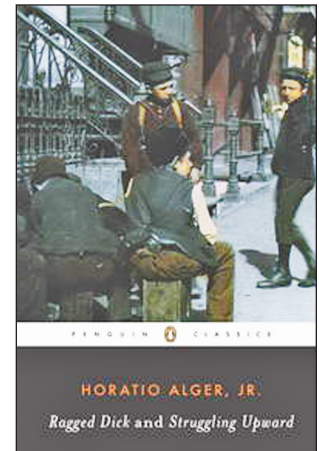
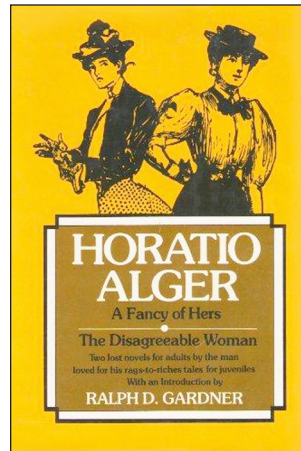
Thankfully, Bart has kept at it, sending me, as well as Mattson and Davis, numerous updates over the years. Now, you can get this 19-page update, which collates these write-ups (titles, dates, authors, artists, publishers and formats) of more than 30 series new to the guide, along with updated info on more than a dozen other series already in the guide.

All include their 5-digit MAD reference numbers. Bart also offers a list of more recently discovered series for which he hopes to fill out the details.

Mattson has been selling this list for just \$7.50, postpaid, through his eBay site at booksbyecm. If he doesn't have a copy currently listed for sale, contact him to see if he can provide a copy.

A recent up-date to
E. CHRISTIAN MATTSON
AND
THOMAS DAVIS'S
'A COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO HARD
COVERED SERIES BOOKS'
BY BART NYBERG
APRIL 2019

Alger publishers: bits & pieces



By Robert D. Eastlack (PF-552)

Editor Bill Gowen invited me to write a brief Alger-related article for *Newsboy*. I accepted the challenge, but was unsure of what to write. As I was looking through my copy of Bob Bennett's *A Collector's Guide to the Published Works of Horatio Alger* (MAD Book Co., 1999), it occurred to me that I could do something with the Alger publishers.

And so I began by developing a spreadsheet listing publishers and the number of titles they printed, both hard-cover and soft-cover editions. I then compared that list with those identified on our website. A total of 115 different publishers were identified. The following is a list of the publishers not appearing on our website (according to Bennett's bibliography). More recent Alger reissues, post-Bennett, are also included.

Classical listings:

- Frederick Gleason published *Ralph Raymond's Heir* in 1869.
- Munsey's Magazine published *A Fancy of Hers* in 1892.
- Seaside Publishing Company issued 3 separate titles in 1892 in its soft-cover **Rugby Library**: *Number 91* and *Tom Tracy*, both as by "Arthur Lee Putnam," and *The Young Acrobat of the North American Circus*, under Alger's own name (these titles according to Bennett).
- Tait, Sons and Company published *The Young Acrobat*, date unknown.
- C. C. Thompson published *Paul the Peddler* in a hard-cover edition, date unknown.
- F. B. Walker published *Tom the Bootblack* in a hard cover, date unknown.

NOTE: It would be appreciated if anyone having a copy of any of the aforementioned would send a scan of

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Final countdown to Shelbyville

(Continued from Page 3)

tions should be made as soon as possible directly to the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 38 West Rampart St., in Shelbyville. The hotel is located at Exit 113 on Interstate 74, southeast of Indianapolis, and the telephone number is (317) 398-0800. Please tell the 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 group-rate deadline for our block of rooms has been extended to **Monday, May 13th**, so if you haven't made your reservation, do it right away!

Our Friday night dinner will be at The Kopper Kettle Inn, located in nearby Morristown. Those of you who attended our 2007 convention will recall our great experience at this historic restaurant. Our annual Saturday night banquet is still in the planning stages. Watch for an update on our website, www.horatioalgersociety.net.

As mentioned in the last issue of *Newsboy*, we will post additional convention information and updates to the website and Facebook page. Wendy and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at the 2019 "Bears of Blue River" convention!



The Meltzer Woods Natural Preserve, located about eight miles southeast of Shelbyville, has been designated a National Natural Landmark, with walking trails and trees as old as 400 years.



The 1910 George Rudicel Polygonal Barn is a unique 12-sided barn in Noble Township in Shelby County.



The Red Mills grist mill was built in 1821 and is one of the oldest grist mills in Indiana.

President's column

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ers. Unusual items such as this book mark (Example 1) for the Mershon Company have been noted.

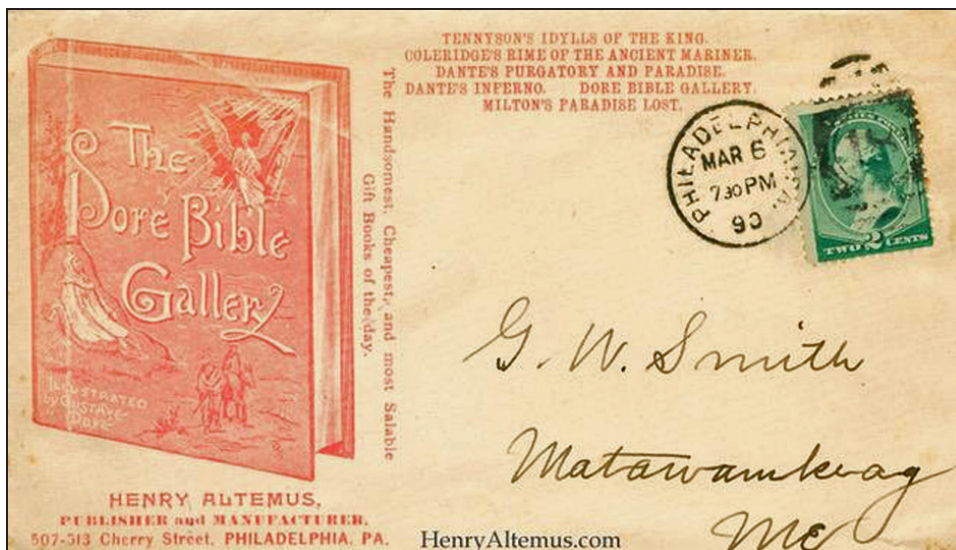
My favorite ephemera, however, are the advertising covers which are defined as any envelope that has advertising on it. There are a number of different categories. The most basic is the corner card with the name of the company printed in the upper left corner of the envelope. A variety of the corner card is the "Cameo" which has the company name embossed in the upper left of the cover. As time went on these covers became



Example 1: Mershon Company bookmark



Example 2: A simple corner advertising card from the 1870s for McLoughlin Brothers publishers. The name of the company is printed in the upper-left corner of the envelope.



Example 3: This Henry Altemus advertising cover includes a picture of one of the publisher's Dore Masterpiece books, *The Dore Bible Gallery*, along with a list of the titles in that series.

more elaborate. Envelopes could have large book lists and some even had full cover pictures.

On Page 6 is an example of a simple corner card from the 1870s, advertising McLoughlin Bros. (Example 2).

For bibliophiles, covers that have advertisements which actually picture books or authors are especially nice. Also on Page 6, check this Henry Altemus early 1890s advertising cover (Example 3). It has a picture of one of the Dore Masterpiece books, along with a list of all of the books in the series.

Many of the advertising covers have pictures of the publisher's building (Example 4). A. J. Holman & Co. of Philadelphia was a major Bible publisher during the second half of the 19th century.

Lee & Shepard of Boston advertised **Oliver Optic's Magazine** on this cover (Example 5).

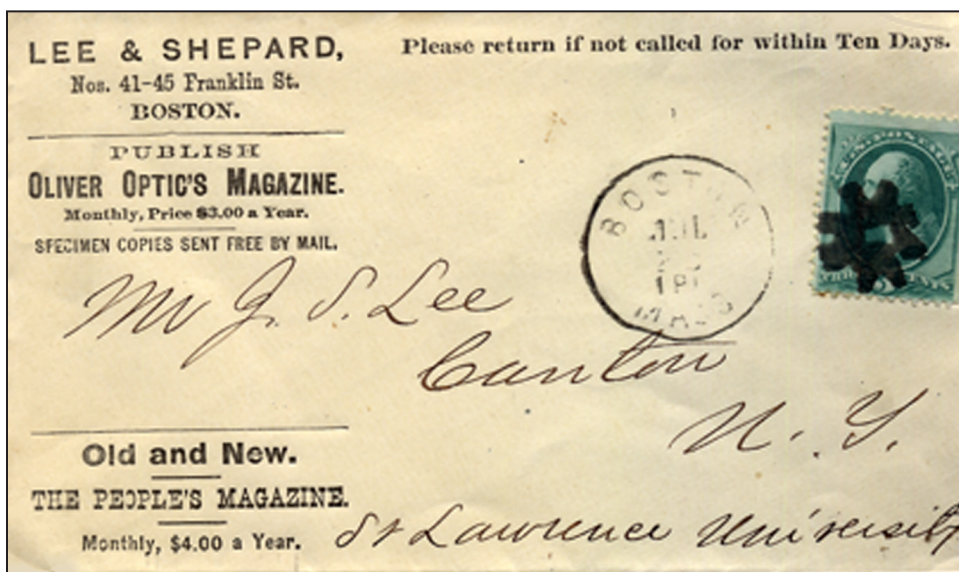
These are just a few examples of the almost unlimited ephemera that can enhance a book collection.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention our upcoming Alger convention in Indiana. I am looking forward to seeing y'all (Texas lingo) in Shelbyville on June 6-9. It should be a great time.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
 Cary Sternick (PF-933)
 26 Chestnut Hill Ct.
 The Woodlands, TX 77380
 (713) 444-3181
 Email: css3@mac.com



Example 4: This cover is one of many that depicted a publisher's building, in this case A.J. Holman & Co. of Philadelphia.



Example 5: Boston's Lee & Shepard used this advertising cover to promote the sales of their monthly *Oliver Optic's Magazine* and *The People's Magazine*.

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

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

Editor's note: Part 1 of this article in the previous issue described the first two of the three volumes in Howard M. Brier's **Skycraft Series**, featuring Barry Martin, a young test pilot for the fictional Hamlin Aircraft Company of Seattle, Washington. Published by Random House, the books were titled *Skycruiser* (1939) and *Skyfreighter* (1942). The stories involved Martin's adventures throughout North America while testing newly developed aircraft by the Hamlin firm, a thinly veiled stand-in for Boeing, also based in Seattle.

Howard M. Brier (1903-1969), a native of Wisconsin, earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Washington. He lived in the Seattle area, starting as a reporter for area newspapers. He also wrote numerous stories for boys in such publications as **The Open Road for Boys**, **Boys' Life** and **The American Boy**. Brier also taught journalism at his alma mater, and in addition to the **Skycraft Series** wrote several other books, nearly all for teen-age readers, including career and sports novels (see list on Page 13).

Skyblazer

Skyblazer (Random House, 1946) follows the same plan of development as *Skyfreighter*, as Barry and his crew fly a new Starwing aircraft into unknown territory. In this case, company president Porter Hamlin asks Martin and his fellow test pilots to fly a new Starwing passenger aircraft, the XC-88, from Seattle to a variety of countries in South America. As in *Skyfreighter*, the flying activities are threatened by unknown agents who are attempting to sabotage the flight and prevent the Starwing aircraft from achieving success.

As in *Skyfreighter*, *Skyblazer* includes a map that shows their route of travel. The aircraft departs Seattle and flies to Los Angeles, then to Mexicali, where it passes border customs, and then to Mazatlan and Mexico City. Its next flight takes it to Albrook Field in the Panama Canal Zone, via Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Managua, and San Jose in Costa Rica. From Panama the aircraft flies to Guayaquil, Lima, La Paz, Arica, Antofagasta, and Santiago, Chile, the end



point of the flight. At nearly every stop they are subject to sabotage efforts.

The XC-88 is a new development in the Starwing line. It is a fully pressurized aircraft and can fly at much higher altitudes than previous passenger and cargo aircraft. On its first test flight it climbs to an altitude of 45,000 feet. It is powered by four engines that develop 3,600 horsepower each with propellers that spin "in an arc seventeen feet in diameter." It holds 100 passengers on two levels inside the fuselage. It is equipped with such modern conveniences as "disappearing ash trays" and "automatic air vents."

If Brier had any aircraft in mind as the model for the XC-88, it was probably Boeing's Model 377, the Stratocruiser, a pressurized, four-engine passenger aircraft which carried passengers on two decks. Unlike the *Skyblazer*, the Model 377 was capable of flying to a maximum altitude of only 30,000 feet. Its engines were slightly less powerful than those on the fictional XC-88. The Model 377 was a later development of the Boeing B-29 bomber, the first pressurized bomber in the Air Force inventory. The B-29 flew to altitudes of up to 30,000 feet on its bombing raids over Japan during the final year of World War II. The Model 377 was in development in 1946, the year *Skyblazer* was published; it first flew commercially the following year.

The story opens in surprising fashion, as the first Skyblazer aircraft crashes during a test flight. Barry is flying as co-pilot in the right seat, while one of Starwing's senior test pilots, Meader, is at the controls in the left seat. Several individuals are on board the aircraft during its test flight, including a radio operator and flight engineer. Other passengers include Slim Cato, a Seattle reporter, and Manuel Raul, a South American airline executive from Santiago, Chile, who has expressed an interest in purchasing a number of XC-88 aircraft.

The flight goes smoothly until, as they are descending in the vicinity of Mount Rainer, the propeller on number 3 engine spins out of control. Meader gives the order to bail out, and all safely depart the plane except Meader, who is still aboard when it crashes. Manuel Raul understandably withdraws his option to purchase the aircraft. Hamlin, undeterred by the accident, vows to continue testing the XC-88 and plans to fly the aircraft on a promotional tour through South America.

The event that opens the book is based on an actual

accident that occurred during a Boeing Company test flight many years earlier. In March 1939, during a test flight, a Boeing Model 307 Stratoliner (a much smaller version of the Stratocruiser) crashed near Mount Rainer with 10 men on board, including seven Boeing pilots and staff, two representatives from KLM (the Royal Dutch Airlines), and one representative from TWA (Transcontinental and Western Airlines). Apparently, the plane entered a spin during one of the test procedures and in the effort to recover, the aircraft suffered structural damage.

Unlike the incident in *Skyblazer*, no one survived. In *Skyblazer* Barry determines that the accident may have been the result of malicious actions by Tuck Pautic, a member of Starwing's engineering staff. Pautic was scheduled to fly on the test flight but failed to appear. Prior to the flight, Barry Martin had received a message from a mysterious individual named "Shadrock," warning him not to go on the flight. Barry eventually learns, at the end of the story, that Pautic was one of

Shadrock's men. The idea of a test demonstrating the XC-88's exceptional flight characteristics may have been suggested by a record-setting flight of a C-97, the military cargo version of the Model 377, which flew from Seattle to Washington, D.C., in January 1945. The aircraft flew 2,323 miles in just over six hours, averaging a little over 385 miles per hour. It is not known whether the ground speed was based on air speed alone or whether the ground speed included the benefit of the winds aloft, which typically assist planes flying from west to east. The historical genesis of the Model 377 is indicated by a reference to the aircraft in one article as "a kind of pot-bellied B-29." Brier refers specifically to this flight in *Skyblazer* (91).

Porter Hamlin provides a philosophical basis for

the political and economic goals of the South American flight: "Our job is to collaborate with other nations -- work out a solution based on good will. We must open our airports on other nations in return for the right to use theirs. Such an exchange would result in rivalry, but not chaotic, ruthless competition" (41).

Hamlin also wants to extend the hand of a "good neighbor" to South America and believes that the flight will aid in "mutual interest" (62). Hamlin's statement reflects the post-war interest in international air travel, made possible by the impressive developments in aircraft technology during the war. Another reason for the trip is to demonstrate the aircraft's excellent performance over its competitors: "We'll have to measure up to the competition of the Lockheed Constellations and Boeing Stratocruiser if we're going to stay in the transport production field," Hamlin says (82).

To avoid a possibly monotonous narrative that could occur when describing arrival and departure at a series of airports, Brier includes information about the South American culture in general, and about many of the locations they visit. Most of this information is supplied by Todd Kelso, Barry's old flight instructor in *Skycruiser*, who joins the flight crew as the flight engineer, the individual responsible for monitoring the engines

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The 4-engine Boeing C-97 Stratocruiser (military version of Boeing's civilian Model 377), developed from the World War II B-29 bomber, likely served as the inspiration for *Skyblazer*.

'Skycraft' Series

(Continued from Page 9)

and other aircraft systems at a control panel located behind the pilots' seats. Having flown extensively in South America after World War I, Todd Kelso has an extensive knowledge South American cultures; he also speaks Spanish.

Todd's extensive knowledge of South American geography and history greatly impresses the other members of the crew, who call him "Professor." Other crew members include (in addition to Barry Martin as pilot) Tiny Hooper as co-pilot, "Perk" Perkins as navigator, "Turkey" Randolph as radio operator, and Slim Cato, a newspaperman whom Hamlin sends along to record the activities of the flight and assist in public relations.

At regular intervals there are episodes in which the mysterious "Shadrock" or his agents attempt to damage the aircraft or otherwise interfere with the progress of the flight. Todd Kelso suggests the attacks on the XC-88 were initiated by men who did not want Manuel Raul to purchase the aircraft, and he warns Barry that aviation in South America is subject to the same forces of economic power as elsewhere: "Fortunes are being made in South America much as they were made in this country. But now we have aviation. It's not strange that aviation should follow the railroads, and cattle rustling, and exploitation of the natives. Aviation provides another way to make money, and the more attractive it becomes, the more likely it is to appeal to crooked operators" (98). This comment is unusual because, in addition to its accuracy, it depicts the aircraft in a negative light, as providing a means

of assisting in illegal operations. In all series books to this point, the aircraft is always portrayed as a positive agent of society. An excellent modern example of the role of the aviation as a tool to aid illegal activities is the Tom Cruise movie, "American Made."

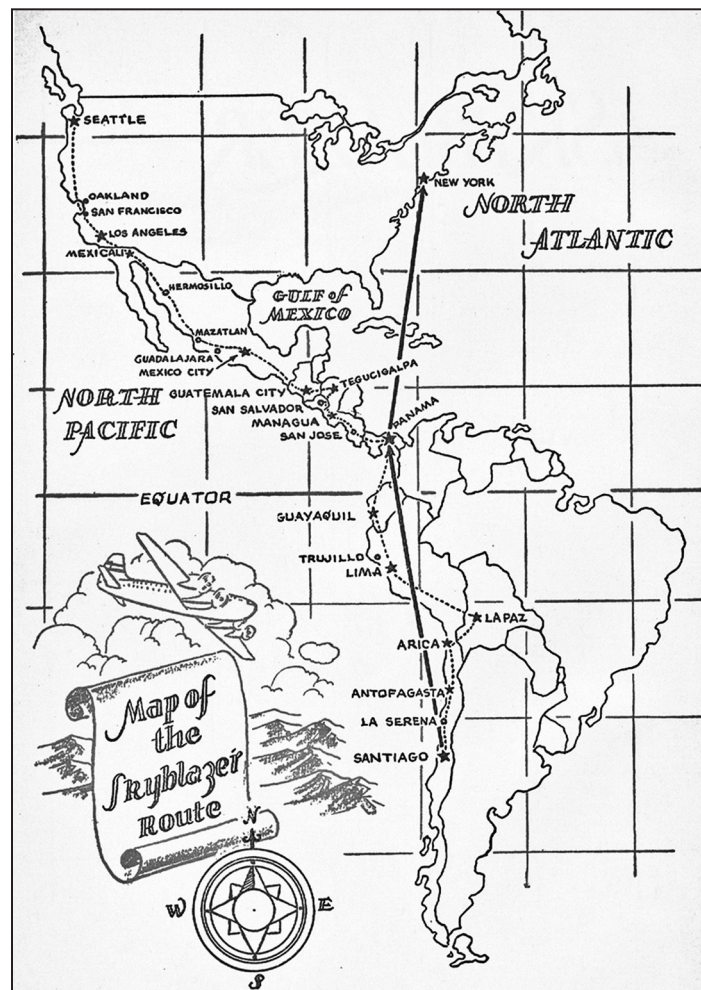
The preliminary activities completed, just short of the midpoint of the book, the Skyblazer, its test flights complete, departs Seattle for its first stop -- Los Angeles. On the flight to L.A., Barry explains to Slim Cato how the plane's pressurization system works, which allows the people to walk around in normal attire in a comfortable environment and breathe normally, even though they would need oxygen masks and thick clothing if

they were flying in an unpressurized aircraft. Barry points out that because they are flying at an altitude of 25,000 feet in the cold temperatures, the engines are leaving vapor trails (contrails) behind them.

While at Los Angeles, Barry talks briefly with Manuel Raul, who is still in the United States deciding which aircraft would be best suited for his operation. While they are in Los Angeles, perpetrators try to set fire to the hangar in which the Skyblazer has been stored, but the airport guards extinguish the fire and pursue the men who set the fire.

The next morning, Barry and his crew fly a short flight from Los Angeles to Mexicali, where their baggage is searched by Mexican customs officials. At Mexicali, Barry compares

the capabilities of the Skyblazer to a Pan American DC-3, which is flying the same route, and the Pan Am pilots express their preference for the larger, faster aircraft. On the flight from Mexicali to Mazatlan, Todd Kelso describes the countryside over which they are flying: "Mexico is not all hopeless country. Even the deserts to the north have their own brand of vegetation -- agave and mesquite bushes, nearly a hundred species of cacti,



and yucca trees. I've seen the entire desert country of Mexico brilliant with flowers. Let it rain for a few minutes, and the whole area bursts into color" (158).

From Mazatlan they fly over Guadalajara on the way to Mexico City, where the crew spends a day enjoying the attractions of the city. Barry observes that in a cab ride, the main objective of the driver is to "get around corners without slackening his speed and without hitting other vehicles" (167-68). The crew stays for two days at a luxury hotel on the Paseo de la Reforma, the wide avenue that crosses Mexico City. Barry and his crewmembers enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and the history of Mexico City. Before they leave, Barry receives another message, urging him to "turn the Skyblazer around and head back for the States" (175).

As they fly over Tapachula, Mexico, on the way to Guatemala, Barry reflects on the new Curtiss electric propellers, which are capable of providing reverse thrust on the landing roll, thus adding to the braking effect while landing. This pattern of introducing descriptions of individual modern components of the Skyblazer at intervals throughout the story results in a more interesting narrative than if he had described all of the aircraft's innovations in a single chapter at the beginning of the book.

From Guatemala City they fly to San Salvador, in the country of El Salvador. After a short stop there, they continue to Tegucigalpa, in Honduras, a 25-minute flight; they then fly to Managua in Nicaragua, and then to San Jose in Costa Rica. They conclude their day's activities when they land at Albrook Field, located in the American Canal Zone of Panama. In one day's time the Skyblazer has touched down or departed from six different airports in seven different countries or territories. At their hotel at Albrook Field, Barry receives another warning message.

From Panama they fly due south to Guayaquil, Ecuador, bypassing Cali, in Colombia. During this segment of the flight, Barry and Slim Cato talk about the differences in attitudes toward aviation from the time Lindbergh flew the Atlantic in 1927 until the present. "When Lindbergh flew the sky," Cato says, "there was drama in the sky." But if Lindbergh flew the Atlantic today, Cato says, "... he wouldn't get a tumble from the press." And if such a story were published, he adds, "... it wouldn't be the same story." When Barry suggests "perhaps flying has become too commonplace," Cato replies: "As long as kids whittle airplanes out of balsa wood, as long as they hang around airports to watch the big ships land and take off, as long as they look to the sky and dream of flight, there will be a punch to aviation" (203).

As Barry is standing near the Skyblazer at Guayaquil



Skyblazer, page 23

airport, he notices a native slip into the rear of the aircraft. When Barry tries to stop him, the man pulls a knife. After a short fight, Barry takes the knife and tells the airfield representatives to hold the man. When Barry investigates, he sees that a rudder control cable has been severed with a hacksaw. After the cable is repaired, they depart for Lima, Peru. Brier provides a good description of the land-water contrast provided by the coast of Peru: "The coast of Peru was rocky and barren in contrast to the harsh jungle of Ecuador. Here great sand dunes rose from the shore and marched back to a dry, desert-like shelf that reached to the foothills of the Andes" (213). They remain in Lima briefly before departing for La Paz, Bolivia.

They spend the night in an unheated hotel in La Paz, which they think of as "a city on another planet," as the high altitude leaves them "with an uncomfortable feeling of being out of place" (217). They happily depart the next morning on a short flight to Arica, Chile, where they clear Chilean customs. The customs men seem unexcited by their arrival when Barry and the others step off the aircraft and complete their tasks with grim

(Continued on Page 12)

'Skycraft' Series

(Continued from Page 11)

determination. Then, they depart for Antofagasta, where Barry notes that the landing strip, located along the Pacific coast, has been constructed of crushed sea shells. Their next stop is Santiago, the farthest point of their travels. In Santiago they stay in the Hotel Crillon, "... a stately building with an air of permanence and stability about it that made Barry feel at home as soon as he had walked through the doors" (228).

However, as soon as he enters his hotel room, he receives a call from the mysterious Shadrock requesting that Barry meet with one of his contacts. While Barry waits for the appointed meeting time, he visits several of the sights of Santiago, which Brier describes in excellent detail. Through a combination of luck and teamwork, Barry and his fellow crewmembers outsmart Shadrock, who is in reality a man named George Martin, whom Barry has encountered several times previously. His associate is Tuck Pautic, the former Starwing employee who sabotaged the first Skyblazer test flight. In the struggle that ensues, George Martin is killed and Pautic is disabled.

While Barry and his crew are foiling the plot to cripple the Skyblazer, Slim Cato has been visiting with Manuel Raul and his wife. Their young daughter, Lolita, is suffering from a rare illness, and Cato suggests that Barry and the crew of the Skyblazer fly her to New York, where she can receive an operation that could save her life. Cato, who has contributed little to the success of the flight thus far, now has an important role to play. He notifies the press prior to the departure of the life-saving flight, and he arranges for a photographer to take pictures of key individuals and scenes. When he requests that Barry Martin stand beside the little girl in the Santiago hospital for a photograph, Barry complains, telling Cato to "lay off that stuff." But Cato tells Barry, "You fly the plane. I'll handle the public relations."

Cato provides a news release that describes the purpose of the flight and provides details about the new Skyblazer, the "greatest airplane that ever took off from Los Cerrillos Airport (the Santiago airport) on a 5,200 mile flight of mercy" (256).

During the flight, Cato gives Turkey Randolph, the radio operator, messages to pass to the press about the progress of the flight, and he provides updated information for the press when they land at Albrook Field to refuel. From Panama they fly above a tropical storm in the Caribbean and land at La Guardia Field,

13 hours and 10 minutes after departing Santiago. The daughter's life is saved, and Raul, impressed by the Skyblazer's capabilities, orders 100 of the planes for his South American airline.

Although we might agree with Barry that Cato's emphasis on public relations is excessive, Brier, who had started his career as a reporter, is in fact making the point that aviation achievements require both publicity as well as flying skills if the world is to be made aware of those achievements. This aspect may help explain why Brier selected the name *Cato* for his newsman: the classical Cato was respected for his moral uprightness and his defense of the ideals of the Roman republic. According to this view, Slim Cato's publicity efforts are not self-promoting, or even Starwing-promoting; the information he is providing is advancing the state of aviation in general.

Brier gives Slim Cato the final words of the story: "A pilot never sells airplanes. An airplane sells itself." (With a little help from an informed publicist).

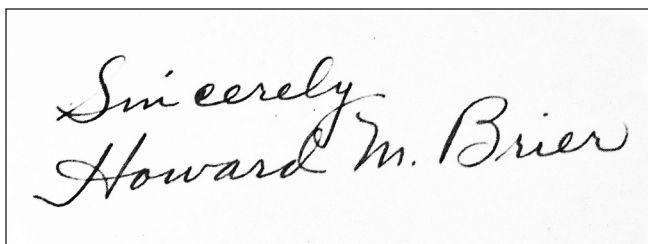
Assessment of the Barry Martin Series

As the discussion above has shown, the Howard Brier **Skycraft series** is one of the most accurate and most detailed aviation series published during the height of the aviation series books period. Although it was probably not intended to be a series when the first title as published, it nevertheless contains all of the characteristics of a series: a central character who is featured in all titles, an evolution of adventures, and a thematic unity.

The three titles in the series show Barry Martin advancing from a junior test pilot to a senior test pilot, flying a constantly improving line of aircraft. Like most aviation series, each adventure is linked to new aircraft operating in the world in realistic settings, in which each new plane demonstrates increased capabilities and performance.

By the time the final title was published in 1946, the world was rapidly moving to jet engine-powered aircraft, and the financial resources required for the operation and maintenance of jets far exceeded those of traditional propeller-driven aircraft. The more efficient jets were just not as amenable to juvenile series aviation adventures as propeller-driven aircraft.

One especially appealing feature of each title in the series is the artwork. The illustrations in the first title, *Skycruiser*, were drawn by Hans Kreis, the illustrations in *Skyfreighter* by Willard Rosenquist, and those in *Skyblazer* by Dwight Logan. Each volume features illustrations at the beginning of each chapter and no repeated illustrations (with the exception of three repeated chapter illustrations in *Skyblazer*; but *Skyblazer* also features five full-page illustrations). The publisher,



Sincerely
Howard M. Brier

Random House, produced handsome editions of each title, their quality above most intended for younger readers. Random House published all of Brier's stories intended for younger readers until 1954, with each volume nicely illustrated.

Of the three stories, *Skycruiser* is the least successful, even though it was widely republished in a 1948 Comet Books paperback edition (with a different artist credited on the title page: Jo Kotula). This story's primary problem is its episodic nature resulting from the compilation of many previously published stories.

The most successful title is *Skyfreighter*, with its focus on a single aircraft flying in the remote Canadian northern wilderness. It effectively combines technical detail with a wonderful atmospheric element, about the nature of the Canadian landscape over which Barry Martin and Pete Bartlett fly. The chapter in which Barry and Pete nearly perish in the wilderness is vivid and convincing. In this story, one has the sense that Brier must have flown over much of the landscape he describes, so accurate are his descriptions.

While *Skyblazer* also focuses on a single aircraft, the amazingly long route of flight, down the west coast of the United States, and from one end of the South American continent to the other, causes the narrative to read at times like a travelogue. While *Skyblazer* has a central thematic focus -- the amazing capabilities of modern commercial aircraft -- it does not develop the same special sense of wonder of *Skyfreighter*.

Although he was not a pilot himself, Brier was familiar with flying procedures and aircraft systems, and his narratives of Barry Martin's adventures flying in a variety of aircraft in a variety of geographic locations are accurate, believable, and enjoyable.

* * *

Longtime H.A.S. member David Kirk Vaughan, Ph. D, is a former U.S. Air Force pilot and author of several aviation-related nonfiction books. He has contributed several articles to *Newsboy* covering aviation-themed boys' series books, along with having numerous articles published in *Dime Novel Round-Up* and *Yellowback Library*, many based on papers presented to the Popular Culture Association. Now living in Texas, Vaughan is a retired emeritus professor at the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio.

Books and articles by Howard M. Brier

The Barry Martin 'Skycraft' Series

1. *Skycruiser* Random House, 1939
Artist: Hans Kreis
2. *Sky Freighter* Random House, 1942
Artist: Willard Rosenquist
3. *Skyblazer* Random House, 1946
Artist: Dwight Logan

Other books

- Waterfront Beat* Random House, 1937
Smoke Eater Random House, 1941
Swing Shift Random House, 1943
Phantom Backfield Random House, 1948
Backboard Magic Random House, 1949
Shortstop Shadow Random House, 1950
Cinder Cyclone Random House, 1952
Fighting Heart Doubleday, 1954
Sawdust Empire: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958
The Pacific Northwest

Magazine articles

- Backboard Magic* (ser) **Boys' Life**, Dec 1948-March 1949
A Bone to Pick (ss) **Boys' Life**, October 1920
Brass Hat (ss) **Boys' Life**, December 1943
Cinder Cyclone (ser) **Boys' Life**, May-August 1952
The Danger Going (ss) **Boys' Life**, October 1954
The Devil Wagon (ss) **The American Boy**, March 1936
Devils Danced (ss) **The Open Road for Boys**, Sept. 1941
Fighting Heart (ser) **Boys' Life**, Nov 1950-Feb 1951
Fire Blood (ss) **Boys' Life**, August 1945
Fools Walk In (ss) **Boys' Life**, November 1936
Hoodoo High (ser) **Boys' Life**, Nov-December 1967
Ladderman (ss) **Boys' Life**, May 1940
New Tricks (ss) **Boys' Life**, December 1937
The Ox Team (ser) **Boys' Life**, October-November 1949
The Phantom Backfield (ser) **Boys' Life**, Sept-Dec 1947
Shortstop Shadow (ser) **Boys' Life**, April-July 1950
Sky Hook (ss) **Boys' Life**, January 1947

Key: ss = short story; ser = serial story



JOHN HAYDEN'S CIGAR.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

"GLAD TO see you, Frank," said John Hayden, as opening the door of his room he welcomed his friend Frank Dunbar. "Come in and sit down anywhere. No ceremony in my sanctum."

To judge from the appearance of the room he spoke correctly. Everything was at "sixes and sevens." A pair of pants lay in one chair, a coat in another, a vest had fallen on the floor, a pack of cards lay on the table, and a few loose cigars on the mantel-piece.

After the exertion of getting up to greet his friend, John Hayden threw himself down on a lounge, and resumed his cigar.

"You see, Frank, I believe in comfort. I work hard during the day, and when night comes I lay off and enjoy myself."

Frank looked around him. He was neat from instinct, and he felt that though that Frank might call this comfort, he should hardly be content to call such a slovenly room home.

"Won't you have a cigar, Frank?" said John, pointing to the mantel. "You'll find some there, and some matches in the safe."

"Thank you, John," was the reply. "I don't smoke."

"Don't smoke! Then you lose something, I can tell you that, old fellow. There's nothing I enjoy so much as a good cigar after I get through work. You must have a stupid time without it."

"Not at all," said Frank smilingly. "I never feel alone with a good book to read. Then I occasionally go to a lecture or concert. Besides, there is another objection I have to smoking.

The first confirmed appearance of this Alger story was in the April 16, 1864 issue of Gleason's Literary Companion (Vol. V, No. 16), with a subsequent printing in The Home Circle in 1872. This is its first appearance in Newsboy.

It is too expensive for me with my income."

"O a few cents a day don't amount to much. However I agree with you about our income being small. Four hundred a year is nothing in these times. How much do you get?"

"The same."

"Don't you find it hard to live upon that sum?"

"Why, I can't have everything I want," said Frank, "nor should I be satisfied to go on much longer without an increase. Still for our age and experience it is perhaps as much as could be expected."

"It isn't as much as I expect," said John decidedly, "and I shall speak to my employer soon about raising it."

At this moment a knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" called John languidly from the lounge.

A woman entered with a long shallow basket.

"O it's my washing. You may put it down on the table, Mrs O'Flaherty."

Mrs. O'Flaherty did as directed, but did not seem disposed to go immediately.

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

"I've bought your bill for three months' washing, Mishter Hayden," said she, "and I hope you'll be willing to pay me, for one of the childers is sick, and we've had to have the doctor to him, and it's the money that don't last long when there's sickness."

"How much is your bill?" asked John a little uncomfortably.

"Seven dollars and eighty-seven cents, Mr. Hayden," answered Mrs. O'Flaherty, producing a dirty piece of paper on which the amount of indebtedness was rather illegibly written.

"Seven dollars and eighty-seven cents!" repeated John. "I had no idea it was so much. Are you sure it's as much as that?"

"Shure sir, and I put down ivery piece," returned Mrs. O'Flaherty, "and not one over. It's tin dozen and a half at seventy-five cents a dozen."

John made a little calculation on a piece of paper, but he could make the amount any less.

Next came an investigation of his pocket-book.

"All I've got is three dollars and a half," he said reluctantly, "and I shan't have any more till the end of the month."

Mrs. O'Flaherty's countenance fell.

"Shure, and I don't know what I shall do," she said, "for I need the money now."

"If I can be of service, pray command me," said Frank, touched by the poor woman's trouble.

"Well, Frank, if you'll lend me five dollars for ten days, I won't forget it."

Frank Dunbar immediately opened his portemonnaie, and passed him the required amount.

John noticed with some surprise that the bill he drew out was only one of quite a large roll.

"How does it happen, Frank?" he said, after Mrs. O'Flaherty had gone, "that you are able to keep so much money on hand?"

"I make a point to do so," said Frank.

"So might I, but that would be all the good it would do."

"Yet we receive equal salaries," said Frank, significantly.

"Then, I suppose, you don't have to pay so much for board."

Comparison, however, showed that in these respects there was no difference.

"Then I don't know how you manage it, for you certainly dress as well as I do."

"I don't smoke," said Frank, smiling.

"O that again," said John, a little impatiently. "That can't make much difference."

Perceiving that the subject was unpleasant, Frank did not urge it.

Frank Dunbar and John Hayden came from the same country village to Boston in the same year, and both by a further coincidence procured situations similarly advantageous. This had happened three years previous. For the first year they had roomed and boarded together, and Frank had had sufficient influence over John to keep him from extravagant habits.

Each required a little help from home the first year, but the second their salary was increased to four hundred dollars, their fathers warned them that they must now provide unaided for their own expenses.

Soon after this, however, they parted company, and John Hayden, left to himself, became less careful with his expenses. He contracted the habit of smoking, because most of the young men with whom he associated smoked also. The expense never occurred to him. Yet it was an item by no means to be despised. He seemed to be constantly behind-hand, considerably to his bewilderment. At the end of the first year he was fifty dollars in debt, and this was precisely the amount which his cigars

had cost him, though he would have been very much surprised had he known it.

However, he commenced the year with an increase of one hundred dollars salary. With this he felt rich. He thought he should soon pay off the debt, and be able to live more liberally than before. In sensibly he increased the numbers of his cigars, and not a few were given to friends in whose he happened temporarily to be.

How had it been in the meantime with Frank Dunbar?

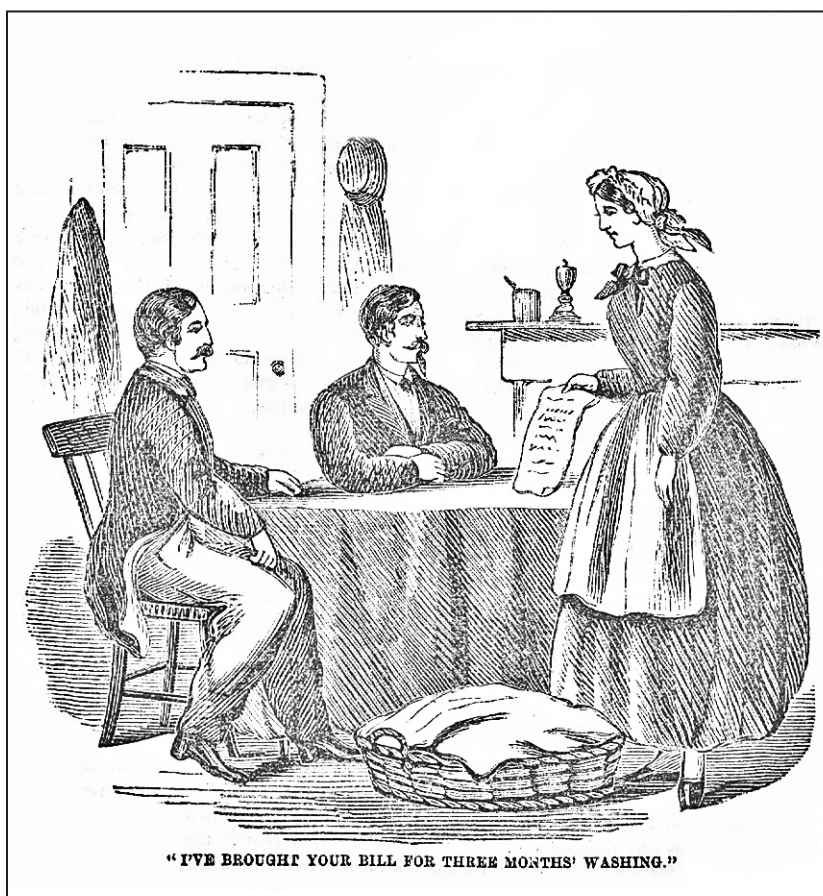
He felt that on a small income he ought to live economically, and if possible to save something out of it. Had he had an

income of a thousand dollars per year he would have allowed himself more luxuries, but on four hundred he felt that he must economize strictly.

At the end of the year he had a reserved fund of fifty dollars saved from his four hundred, and of course he was one hundred dollars better off than John, who was the same amount in debt.

When his salary was raised to five hundred dollars, he increased his expenditures somewhat, but from this sum he saved one hundred and twenty-five dollars, making an aggregate reserve fund of one hundred and seventy-five. John, on

(Continued on Page 16)



"I'VE BROUGHT YOUR BILL FOR THREE MONTHS' WASHING."

Alger publishers: bits & pieces

(Continued from Page 4)

the cover and spine to me for posting on our website.

Modern listings:

- George C. Clark published *Strive and Succeed* in 1972.
- Dave Collier published *Striving for Fortune* in 1997.
- Holly Publishing Company reissued the 25 titles published by the Royal Publishing Co., date unknown.
- New American Library issued *Ragged Dick* in 1980.
- Bob Sawyer issued 9 photocopy titles in 1982 as “The Sun Series” (see *Newsboy*, March-April 1989).
- Dover released *Adrift in New York* in a 1974 dime novel compilation, and *Struggling Upward* in 1984.
- Van Nostand Reinhold issued a two-in-one volume in 1981 of *The Disagreeable Woman* and *A Fancy of Hers* (see illustration).
- Viking Penguin, Inc. published a two-in-one volume in 1985 of *Ragged Dick* and *Struggling Upward* (see illustration).

More recent listings:

- W. W. Norton in 2008 issued, in its Critical Edition Series, an authoritative text, with essays on Contexts and Criticism, of *Ragged Dick, or Street Life in New York with the Boot Blacks*, softcover, edited by Hildegard Hoeller (reviewed in *Newsboy*, November-December 2007).
- Broadview Press in 2017 published a two-in-one annotated soft-cover edition of *Ragged Dick* and *Risen From the Ranks*, edited by Gary Scharnhorst (reviewed in *Newsboy*, July-August 2017).
- University of Akron Press in 2018 published a soft-cover edition of *From Canal Boy to President*, edited by Jon Miller, (reviewed in *Newsboy*, January-February 2019).

Trivia:

- 1) Of the 115 different Alger publishers, 24 published only one volume.
- 2) Two-in-one volumes were printed by several publishers (examples listed above).
- 3) Street & Smith published the most Alger titles (104) in their **Alger Series** paperbacks.



JOHN HAYDEN'S CIGAR.

(Continued from Page 15)

the contrary, was now more than a hundred dollars in debt.

But again the salaries were raised. Each of the men now received six hundred dollars.

Frank now moved into a better room. He bought a few engravings, which he hung round the walls, neatly framed in black walnut, purchased a comfortable arm-chair, and commenced a library, by the purchase of a few choice standard volumes. All this outlay did not much exceed fifty dollars. John retained the room in which we last saw him, and the lapse of a year had added nothing to the attractiveness of its appearance.

One evening at Frank's invitation John came round to his room.

“Why, Frank,” he exclaimed in surprise. “You are growing extravagant. I can't afford to live in this style.

“Your income is the same, John”

“Yes, I know.”

“But you smoke, John.”

“Of course, everybody does, but you don't really think it makes much difference, do you?”

“Are you willing to make an estimate with me?”

“Certainly, if only to show you how wrong you are.”

“Well, how many cigars do you smoke in a day?”

“One when I get up. One after every meal. And – well, say two in the evening.”

“That makes six.”

“And occasionally I give one to a friend.”

“A dozen in the course of a week?”

“I think so.”

“This added to your daily consumption will amount to fifty-four cigars a week. How much do you pay apiece?”

“Four cents on an average.”

“Making two dollars and sixteen cents a week, or one hundred and twelve dollars and thirty-two cents in a year.”

John Hayden started in surprise. “I could not have believed it,” he said. “and you save that amount, Frank?”

“I have now two hundred and fifty dollars clear,” said Frank.

“And I am nearly two hundred dollars in debt. To tell the truth, Frank, I have been extravagant in other ways. Oftentimes in an evening I run in and get an oyster stew, and perhaps invite a friend to go with me. I have no doubt I spend a dollar a week in this way.”

“You must turn over a new leaf, John.”

“I will try to do so. The fact is, my debts trouble me.”

“You can be a free man in a year if you have the determination.”

John made the determination, and a year later he paid off the last cent of his indebtedness. Six months later he had nearly a hundred dollars, while Frank had five hundred. He felt that self-indulgence was dearly purchased at the expense of independence.