



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899

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

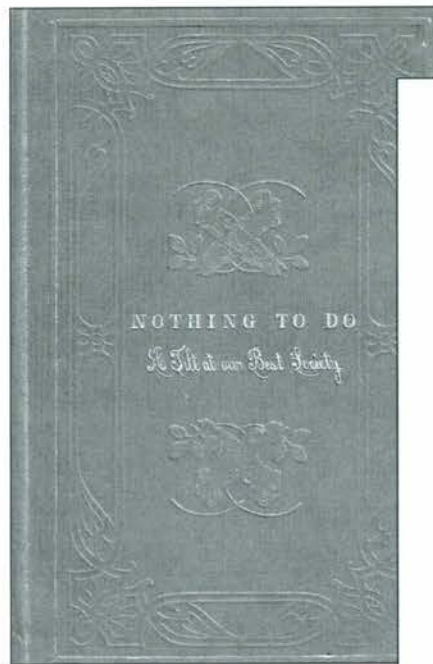
VOLUME LX

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

NUMBER 1

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy

-- See Page 3



Cover and title page for Horatio Alger's *Nothing to Do: A Tilt at our Best Society*.

NOTHING TO DO:

A TILT AT OUR BEST SOCIETY.

To do nothing is to be a great part of your life.

ILLUSTRATED.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY JAMES FRENCH & CO.
1857.

More on the 2022 convention:

A tour of Virginia's leading historic sites

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Conclusion: Hugh McAlister's 'Worth While Books' series

An overlooked Horatio Alger-like gem

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President's column

Greetings from sunny south Florida! For those of you who've borne the brunt of this winter's unusually harsh weather, you have our sympathies, and sincere wishes for good health.

Spring is just around the corner, and with it, thoughts and plans for the forthcoming warm weather. Now is the time to start thinking about your summer holidays and our annual convention in June. We are indeed lucky to have esteemed member Jack Bales once again planning a marvelous convention for us in Fredericksburg. Jack will be laying out many of the details in this and upcoming issues, so I needn't repeat them here.

The convention promises to be a time of leisure and fun for our members, but your board of directors will be getting some important work done as well. In addition to the usual administrative tasks, we will be looking to elect a new vice president, and to fill the director's vacancy left by the passing of our beloved member Mike Morley. As you may know, the vice president is, by custom, routinely seated as president for the following term, so this election is naturally an important one.

It has come to my attention that the Society is sorely in need of donations and consignments for our forthcoming convention. The book/ephemera auction is one of the highlights of the convention. We've had some very good years, most recently as the beneficiaries of legendary member Jim Thorp's book collection over the past two years. Jim's wife, Carole, honored his wish that his collection go to the Horatio Alger Society, and we remain eternally grateful for that consideration.

The convention auction is a significant source of income for the Society, usually second only to dues income and occasionally exceeding it, as in the recent case of the Thorp collection. With a declining membership, we need every penny we can get to keep this institution going for those who continue to value the writings of Alger and his contemporaries. We have thus far avoided any recent increases to membership dues and hope to be able to continue to do so, but we need your help.

Income is the lifeblood of this organization, and your Alger or series books and related ephemera could be part of the solution. If you have any unwanted items of interest to our members, please consider donating them or consigning them in our upcoming annual auction.

We would love for you to come and bring them along

(Continued on Page 4)

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. and to encourage the spirit of Strive & Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes. Our members conduct research and provide scholarship on the life of Horatio Alger, Jr., his works and influence on the culture of America. The Horatio Alger Society embraces collectors and enthusiasts of all juvenile literature, including boys' and girls' series books, pulps and dime novels.

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Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is \$25 (\$20 for seniors), with single issues of **Newsboy** \$4.00. Please make remittance payable to **Horatio Alger Society, 4940 Old Main St., Unit 402, Henrico, VA 23231**.

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

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

Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to "Horatio Alger Society," to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047.

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 those free "Alger for sale" ads to the editor at the above address, where you can also send "Letters to the Editor" by regular mail or by e-mail to hasnewsboy@aol.com.

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy

The 1857 books and more

By Scott B. Chase (PF-1106)

On February 7, 1857, the poem *Nothing To Wear: An Episode of City Life* was published in *Harper's Weekly*.¹ Originally published anonymously, William Allen Butler's poem captivated readers and society at large, and the response was widespread. Horatio Alger, Jr. was a participant in this response as will be seen later, and as noted by Gardner² and Wolven³, the poem's popularity created "somewhat of a fad." With the success here and abroad leading to book sequels, a false authorship claim, songs, dolls, a painting, a dialogue, a play and more, I call the popularity a frenzied response. In aggregate,

no fewer than 15 different responses appeared by the end of that year. So much material resulted from the original poem that only the book sequels presented in the proper publishing sequence will be covered in detail in this article.

The *Nothing To Wear* book (Figure 1, page 7) followed the poem in June, and like the original it was published anonymously.⁴ A nice treatment of some of the history of the poem from the author himself is given in the June-July, 1982 issue of *Newsboy*.⁵

The *Nothing To Wear* book was published by Rudd & Carleton on June 13, 1857⁶ (Figure 2). Their ad earlier in June (Figure 3), just four months after the poem ap-

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2022 convention preview

A tour of Virginia's leading historic sites — Part 1

By Jack Bales, PF-258

"Steeped in history and blessed with natural beauty, Virginia oozes tradition and charm," writes MapQuest in its article on "Virginia's Top Ten Historic Sites to Visit." It adds that the southern state "is a fascinating place to explore for anyone with an appreciation of history."

I've mentioned this sense of history quite a bit in my articles highlighting "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg," our 2022 Horatio Alger Society convention on June 23-26 in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Not surprisingly, the visitors' sites on MapQuest's Top Ten list reflect this historical perspective.

In reverse order, the list includes the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, designed by Thomas Jefferson; Appomattox Court House, three miles to the northeast of Appomattox and where General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia surrendered to United States Army General Ulysses S. Grant; Montpelier, the Orange County home of America's fourth president, James Madison; Richmond's Museum of the Confederacy and the home of Jefferson Davis, called the White House of the Confederacy; and Old Town Alexandria, a seaport



The McLean House in Appomattox Court House, Va., where the terms of surrender between Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant were signed on April 9, 1865. The family of Wilmer McLean, owner of the house, are shown earlier, sitting on the porch. Library of Congress archive

during the Colonial era and a hospital center during the Civil War.

The remaining five, from number 5 to number 1, are the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park; Arlington National Cemetery; Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello, in Charlottesville; Mount Vernon,

(Continued on Page 5)

Editor's notebook

As we hope the grip of winter in the Great Midwest finally starts to lessen, thoughts of the 2022 H.A.S. convention, "Frank and Fearless in Fredericksburg," start to come into focus. Of course, host Jack Bales has for this and other recent **Newsboy** issues offered a series of preview articles, the current installment a background on why Virginia's is one of the most historically significant states in our nation. This topic will continue in the March-April **Newsboy** as well.

So in that vein, Jack has prepared the official convention registration form, which is enclosed in the centerfold (Pages 10-11) of this issue.

The most notable thing on the form is both the convention registration fee and the hotel room rate are unchanged from last year, quite a feat when you consider we are undergoing a period of economic inflation. In anticipation of this, he negotiated with the Hampton Inn and Suites early in the summer and locked in our rate. Contracts with UMW for the Friday box lunch and Saturday's annual awards banquet were also negotiated in a timely manner.

Of course, recent slowdowns (or shutdowns) of oil production in the Middle East have hiked prices at the pump in recent days to just under the \$4 mark where I live, and airfares likely will be affected similarly this spring due to the costs of jet fuel. So we take the bad with the good, I guess.

If you have any questions about the registration form, Jack has included his email address and phone number. Every year we get several early registrations, and Jack realizes that health or other issues could interfere with your plans to travel in June. Don't worry — he'll make good on your registration fee if you must cancel. Of course, we hope you can make it to Fredericksburg, since this is the one time each year we can get together and renew old (and new!) friendships.

In the past year as I've noted previously, this space has way too often announced the passing of a Partic'lar Friend, and this issue is no exception. Frank W. Quillen, 78, of Kingsport, Tennessee, died over Christmas weekend, probably on the holiday itself, of congestive heart failure. When a cousin received no response from a wellness call on Dec. 26, he drove to Quillen's home and found he had passed away. Frank had been hospitalized since late November for his heart condition but

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President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

with you, but books can also be shipped quite cheaply at Media Mail rates, and in some cases, we may be able to collect them from you. We need every donation we can get.

Each year we regrettably lose valuable members and we frequently don't benefit from their Alger collections. We would ask all members who care about the continuing vitality of the Society to consider us in their plans. Either by bequeathal or lifetime endowment, any such gift would prove invaluable and stand as an enduring legacy to each cherished member.

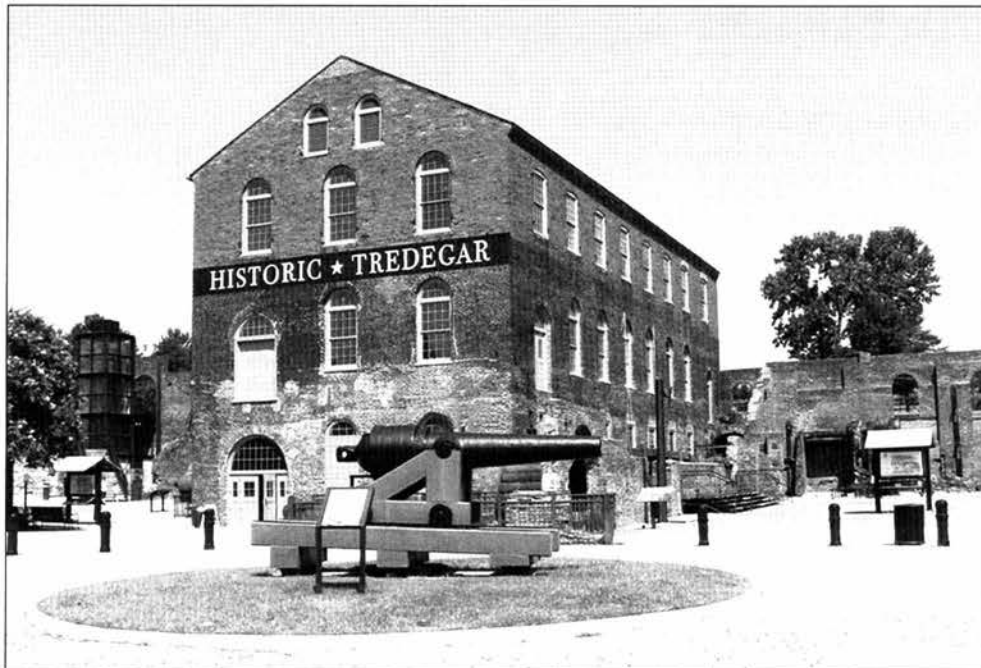
On a lighter note, it's not too early to thank Terry J. Booth for his enlightening article about the Hugh McAlister series by Saalfield, the initial installment of which appeared in the November/December 2021 **Newsboy** issue. I've been collecting these books for some time now, and even though I had divined some parts of their baffling publication puzzle on my own, I never had the full story ... until now. With their vibrant and sophisticated art deco cover art, they were the perfect choice for our annual color issue. Well done, Terry! I look forward to the article's conclusion ... which is to be found within these very pages.

It's also not too early to show our appreciation to two members who have given much of their valuable time to new roles within the organization. Longtime member and devoted convention auctioneer Bob Huber has assumed the role of our webmaster, and by all accounts is doing a first-rate job. Despite a busy schedule, he has found time to administer the site and field a good number of inquiries that have come through the portal. Thanks for the dedication, Bob!

Perhaps no one has worn more hats in this organization than our own Rob Kasper, now dauntlessly undertaking the task of treasurer. Rob has overseen a seamless transition and even expanded the role of treasurer, all with characteristic professionalism and reliability. Remarkably, he somehow also finds time to help out board members and contribute articles to **Newsboy**.

As these two approach their first anniversary in their respective roles, please join me in expressing our sincere thanks for their dedication and service to the Horatio Alger Society.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
James King (PF-1126)
711 East Plantation Circle
Plantation, Fla. 33324
(954) 473-6927
E-mail: jamesreed9@gmx.com



This building at the historic Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond is now part of the American Civil War Museum.

Wikimedia Commons

Convention preview

(Continued from Page 3)

George Washington's home, in northern Virginia's Fairfax County, and the cities of Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, located along the 23-mile Colonial Parkway in southeastern Virginia.

Fredericksburg's former tourism director once told me that the Civil War was the city's No. 1 tourist attraction. It's a big draw in Richmond, too. I was hiking with my son along the James River and he pointed out the American Civil War Museum at historic Tredegar, which is referred to as "the gateway to Civil War travel in the region."

The Tredegar Iron Works was the largest supplier of iron in the Confederacy. The site is now home to both a visitor center and a museum that features exhibits of artifacts that examine the war through the perspectives of Confederate, Union and African American participants.

You don't have to spend your time indoors to experience the Civil War. Motorists can follow the paths of Civil War armies, stopping along the way to hear details on their car radios by tuning to 1620 AM.

One of the most popular of these scenic drives is Lee's Retreat. (Go to the webpage www.adventure.howstuffworks.com, and in the search window type "Lee's Retreat" or "Virginia Scenic Drives." You can also click

on www.visitfarmville.com/lees-retreat.

Lee's Retreat is a 110-mile driving tour with 26 stops that follows Lee and his men west from Petersburg to Appomattox. Be sure to stop at the Siege Museum in Petersburg, which offers the civilian side of the series of battles that took place around Petersburg from June 1864 to March 1865.

A highlight of the museum is an excellent film narrated by actor and Petersburg native Joseph Cotten ("Citizen Kane," "The Magnificent Ambersons," "The Third Man" and Alfred Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt"). Petersburg is also the home of the Petersburg National Battlefield.

Another site highlighted in Lee's Retreat is Petersburg's Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier, which features a Civil War battlefield, antebellum homes, a slave life exhibit, and educational programs on the life of the common soldier. It was on this battlefield on April 2, 1865, that General Grant's Union soldiers breached General Lee's defensive line and set in motion events that led to Lee's surrender a week later.

Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historic State Park in Rice, Virginia, near Farmville, commemorates one of the last major engagements of the Civil War. On April 6, 1865, nearly a quarter of General Lee's army, more than 7,700 men, were killed, wounded, or captured there. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House three days later. The park has historical interpreters and guides, living history events, and hiking trails with interpretive signs that describe the fighting. There are also free tours of the Overton-Hillman House, which served as a hospital during and after the battle.

In the next issue of **Newsboy**, I will feature the number one Virginia tourist attraction: Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown. I look forward to seeing Horatio Alger Society members, spouses, and guests at our convention, held from Thursday, June 23, to Sunday, June 26, 2022.

A final note: Our convention registration form is enclosed as an insert with this issue. The registration fee and hotel nightly rate are unchanged from last year!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill,

Plans for the 2022 Horatio Alger Society convention are moving right along. I reserved a large room in an Italian restaurant, Castiglia's, for the Friday night dinner (it's less than two miles from the Hampton Inn), and Rob Kasper and I recently had lunch there. We talked to the owner about the entrees for our buffet, and we settled on lasagna, chicken with pasta and pesto sauce, and a "vegetable medley." The owner suggested small cream puffs filled with chocolate cream for dessert, and he brought to our table a few for us to sample. Quite tasty!

As we all know, costs are rising, but I'm pleased to say that the convention fee will remain the same as last year. I signed contracts for the Friday lunch and Saturday banquet months ago, and we are safely locked in for those fees.

I noticed that Bob Huber mentioned the convention on the Society website. He continues to do a fine job of maintaining the web page for us.

On Saturday, Feb. 12, Rob and I drove to Charlottesville to meet up with Jeff Looney at a local restaurant for breakfast (we got there by 7 a.m.!) Jeff has quite a few book collecting interests, and after breakfast we drove to his house, where we got to admire both his impressive collection and examine some of his recent acquisitions.

Jeff is a man of many eclectic interests, and one of them is deltiology, the collecting of postcards. I was rather fascinated to see some of his "hold-to-light" postcards, many of which were produced during the early 1900s. A thin layer of colored tissue paper is layered between two layers of postcard paper. Part of the top layer of postcard paper is cut away to reveal the tissue paper, and when the postcard is held up to the light (such as a lamp), the cut-out sections appear brightly colored or illuminated. For example, a moon would seem to be shining, or a lighthouse's beam would appear shining across an ocean.

Speaking of eclectic interests, I'm happy to relate that my book *The Chicago Cub Shot for Love: A Showgirl's Crime of Passion and the 1932 World Series*, has been doing well, and I'm having a great time giving Zoom PowerPoint presentations to baseball groups and libraries around the country.

A reviewer for **Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture** wrote that the story "will have you shaking your head in disbelief." He's right! It's a heckuva good story, and I tell people that the tale itself, one of baseball history and true-crime intrigue (with a burlesque show



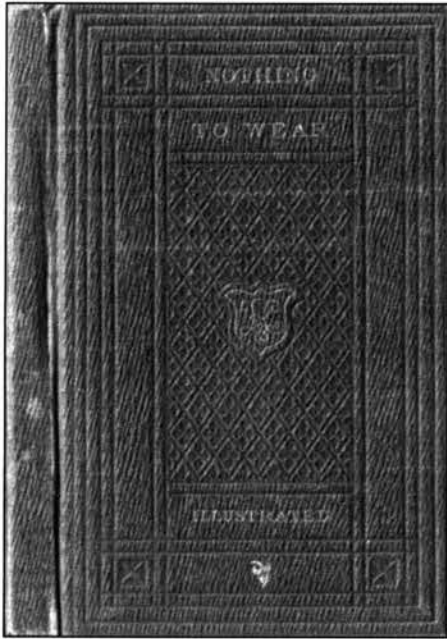
Castiglia's Italian restaurant, location for the Friday night dinner at the 2022 convention. Just under two miles from the Hampton Inn, Castiglia's has a private room where we will enjoy a buffet. Photos by Jack Bales

featuring "Bare Cub Girls" thrown in for good measure) deserves all the credit, not me.

In April I'll be speaking in-person to the members of the Historical Society of Quincy, Illinois, and a librarian in Brookfield, Illinois, inquired about using my book as a "community read" in August. On top of that, while chatting with a campus speaker at my university, he told me he saw copies at a book shop at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

I look forward, Bill, to seeing you and other Horatio Alger Society members and guests at "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg" in just a few months!

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



Novelty and Elegance.

JUST PUBLISHED,
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NOTHING TO WEAR,
(From *Harper's Weekly*)
Profusely and Elegantly Embellished,
And printed on Tinted Paper,
With Exquisite Wood Engravings, from Original Designs
by HOPPIN
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Price 50 cents.

This wonderfully clever satire upon the fashions and extravagance of New York female aristocracy, appeared first in *Harper's Weekly Journal*, and so complete a hit did it prove, that

One Hundred and Forty Thousand
copies were sold, and new editions are still being called for. Having already had such enormous success, we feel confident that the present

Superbly Illustrated Edition

will meet with the approval of every one; and as the book is produced in the very highest style of art, as regards paper, printing, illustrating and binding, the Publishers are confident that no taste, however fastidious, will remain unsatisfied.

Booksellers, by ordering early, will secure lots from the first edition.
Copies of this book will be sent by mail, postage paid, to any part of the United States, on receipt of the price—50 cents.

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Publishers and Booksellers,
310 Broadway, N. Y.

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NOVELTY AND ELEGANCE.
Will be published Saturday, June 13,
A superb edition of

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(From *Harper's Weekly*)
Profusely and Elegantly Embellished, and
printed on Tinted Paper, with exquisite
Wood Engravings, from Original Designs by
Hoppin (the first humorous artist in America),
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68. Price, 50 cents.

This wonderfully clever satire upon the
fashions and extravagance of New York fe-
male aristocracy, appeared first in *Harper's
Weekly Journal*, and so complete a hit did it
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ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THOU-
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SUPERBLY ILLUSTRATED EDITION
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Booksellers, by ordering early, will secure
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TERMS TO THE TRADE:
500 Copies, 30 cents; 100, 35 cts.; 25, 38
cts.; under 25, 40 cents.

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Publishers and Booksellers,
No. 310 Broadway, N. Y.

From left: (Fig. 1), the *Nothing to Wear* book; (Fig. 2), the Rudd & Carleton book ad of June 13, 1857; (Fig. 3), the June 6, 1857 Rudd & Carleton ad, stating "in press."

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy

The 1857 books and more

(Continued from Page 3)

peared in *Harper's Weekly*, stated when referring to the *Weekly*, "140 thousand copies were sold, and new editions are still being called for."⁷ Remembering that radio, television, the internet (electricity for that matter), didn't exist in 1857 to spread the "*Nothing To Wear*" word, and the fact that the total U.S. population in 1857 was only about 29 million people,⁸ this ad gives a hint to the growing frenzied response to the poem.

The ads by Rudd & Carleton for their *Nothing To Wear* book continued for several weeks, running into July. Very favorable reviews of the book's illustrations by Augusta Hoppin in Boston newspapers helped fuel the frenzy.⁹ The reviews made statements saying of the illustrations: "The illustrations of this little book are even more worthy of the text. Nothing of the kind that we know of has ever been produced in America within a long way of the excellence of these eight wood cuts." Well-deserved high praise which didn't go unnoticed.

While the positive reviews of the *Nothing To Wear*

book were coming in, the ad for the first book sequel appeared.¹⁰ This was *Nothing To Do: An Accompaniment to "Nothing To Wear,"* written anonymously by "A Lady" (Justin Howard) shown in Figure 4.¹¹ It was published by Wiley & Halsted on July 29, 1857^{12,13} and was illustrated by the author (Figure 5).

The second book sequel was Horatio Alger, Jr.'s *Nothing To Do: A Tilt at our Best Society*, published anonymously on Aug. 22, 1857¹⁴ by James French & Co (Figure 6).¹⁵ The original notice was tucked within the "List of New Works" and didn't even fill two lines (Figure 7). There was a bigger ad for the third book sequel by Doesticks just a few pages later.

There is a much better ad for Alger's sequel in *Harper's Weekly* of Sept. 5, 1857 (Figure 8) which calls this poem "a companion and *Sequel* to the well-known *Nothing To Wear*,"¹⁶ although it followed Howard's *Nothing To Do* by almost a month. Gardner indicates that the publisher of Alger's *Nothing To Do* deposited the title for copyright on Aug. 7, 1857, but incorrectly states that Alger's "Nothing" book was the first sequel.

With three books now published by August 1857, the publisher of the first book, Rudd & Carleton, took advantage of the frenzied interest and came out with the third sequel, *Nothing To Say: A Slight Slap at Mobocratic Snobbery, Which Has "Nothing To Do" with "Nothing To Wear"* (Figure 9) by Q.K. Philander Doesticks, P.B. (Mortimer Q. Thomson).¹⁷ It was published on Sept. 5,

(Continued on Page 8)

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy

The 1857 books and more

(Continued from Page 7)

1857,¹⁸ and there was quite an ad for it in *The New York Daily Times* and other newspapers (Figure 10).

About a week later, the fourth sequel was published.¹⁹ It was issued Sept. 11, 1857 (Figure 11), by Dick & Fitzgerald, and it was called *Nothing To Eat* (Figure 12).²⁰ This was also published anonymously, with the subtitle "NOT By the Author of 'Nothing To Wear,'" and it was noted on the dedication page "By a jolly good natured author." Authorship has erroneously been attributed to Horatio Alger, Jr. and to Judge Thomas Haliburton. Even though there are numerous editions of *Nothing To Eat* available for sale today listing Alger as the author, it is well established that he is not the author of *Nothing To Eat* (see Gardner).²¹

In personal communications with Richard Davies, who wrote a biography of Judge Haliburton²², he indicates that it is very unlikely that Judge Haliburton is the author of *Nothing To Eat*. In reviewing *Nothing To Eat*, Davies says he sees nothing in it that links the poem to Judge Haliburton. In 1857, the judge was retired and living in England, the judge didn't write poetry and he was still involved with Sam Slick. *Nothing To Eat* is not in the list of works written by Judge Haliburton in Davies' biography. I think it is very safe to rule out both Alger and Judge Haliburton as the author of *Nothing To Eat*, and additional research is needed to determine true authorship.

The fifth book sequel, *Nothing To Wear: An Episode of Fashionable Life*, was published after — likely shortly after — Sept. 19, 1857 by Samson Low, Son and Co., of London (title page, Figure 13), although an advertisement for its publication has yet to be found.²³ Although it was published without authorship, the Preface, from the *Illustrated London News*, reads "The following lines are believed to be from the pen of William Allen Butler, an eminent lawyer of New York." The note in the Preface bounds the publication of this sequel to after September 19 and the year on the title page puts it at 1857.

Apparently, news of the true author of *Nothing To Wear*, published August 8 in *Harper's Weekly*, hadn't made it to London by the time this sequel was pub-

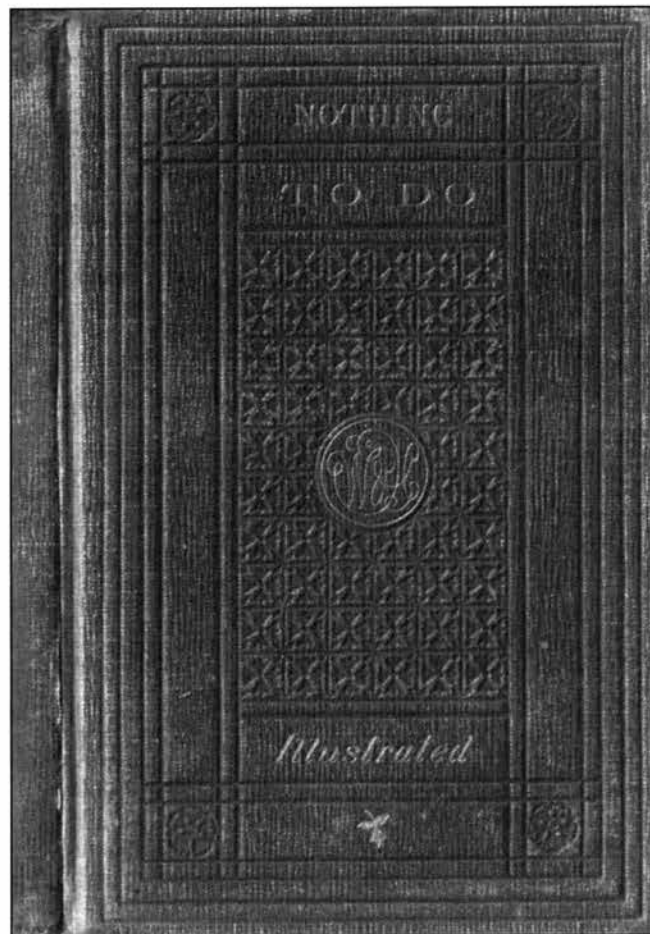


Fig. 4: *Nothing to Do* book by "A Lady" (Justin Howard), published by Wiley & Halsted on July 19, 1857.

WILEY & HALSTED, No. 351 Broadway,
have just published :

NOTHING TO DO:
An Accompaniment to
NOTHING TO WEAR.
"Look here upon this picture and on this."
Uniform in size and binding with "Nothing to Wear."
Price, 50 cents.
From *The Home Journal*.

"The poem is unrestrained, and perfectly adapted to the times, showing no little originality and brilliancy of mind. It will, in truth, establish the writer as a witty and successful poet and satirist. Yet it is so good-natured and graceful that it cannot fail to please; and so true, that it deserves to find a place on every family table, and will be appreciated by every one of taste, both for its merits as a poem and its cleverness as a satire."

Also, on Wednesday, Aug. 5,
THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING:
IN THREE LETTERS TO BEGINNERS.
BY JOHN RUSKIN, M. A.
Author of "Modern Painters," "Stones of Venice," &c.
Letter I.—On First Practice.
Letter II.—On Sketching from Nature.
Letter III.—On Color and Composition.
Appendix—Things to be Studied.
One vol., 12mo., with fifty illustrations. Price \$1.

Fig. 5: *Nothing to Do* advertisement of July 29, 1857, promoting this first book sequel to *Nothing to Wear*.

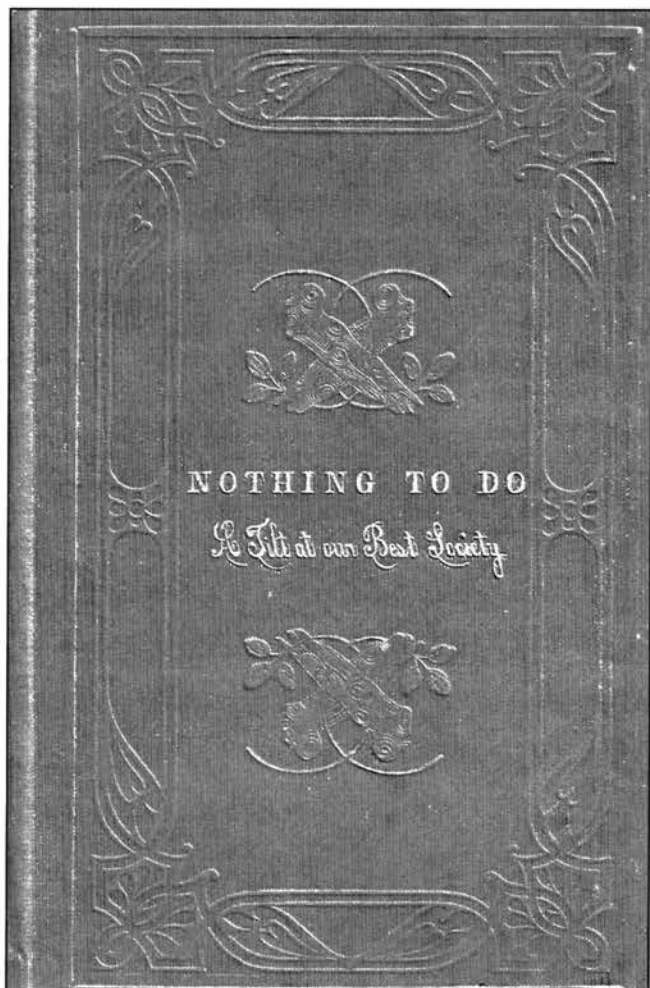


Fig. 6: Horatio Alger's *Nothing to Do, A Tilt on Our Best Society*, published by James French & Co. The original notice (Fig. 7, below) was a simple two-line ad inserted within a "list of books" in the *American Publishers' Circular* of Aug. 22, 1857. This was the second book sequel.

Nothing to Do: a Tilt at our Best Society. Illustrated. 16mo. pp. 45. [James French & Co.]

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A Tilt at Our Best Society.
BY A GENTLEMAN.

This Poem is a companion and *Sequel* to the well-known *NOTHING TO WEAR*. The hero, Augustus Fitz Herbert, encounters, at the Potiphars' party, Miss Flora M'Flimsey, of Madison Square, and the result is "A Marriage in High Life."

Published by JAMES FRENCH & CO., Boston, by whom orders are respectfully solicited.

Fig. 8: A more descriptive ad for Alger's *Nothing to Do* was published in *Harper's Weekly* on Sept. 8, 1857. The author is listed anonymously as "A Gentleman."

lished.²⁴ This sequel is different from the others in that it is bound in flexible cloth, the only illustrations are on the front and back covers, and it is tailored to the British audience.

The last of the known book sequels is *Nothing To You; or, Mind Your Own Business*, by "Knot-Rab" (K. Barton), published by Wiley & Halsted (Figure 14).²⁵ It was announced Sept. 26, 1857²⁶ (Figures 15, 16), but it wasn't published until Dec. 24, 1857.²⁷

The *New York Times* review (Figure 17) gave high marks for the illustrations, saying they were "very cleverly done," but they gave a mixed review of the text. The book was listed in the "List of New Works" section of the *American Publishers' Circular* on January 2, 1858²⁸ (Figure 18) and in the "New Publications" section of the same issue of the APC, but Wiley & Halsted's advertisement two pages later had no mention of the book.

When the last book sequel came out in December of 1857, it brought the total number of known books in the "Nothing" series to seven. From the first book coming out in June, the seven books were published over seven months, and in addition to the November reprinting of the original poem in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*,²⁹ these seven books helped to fuel the "Nothing Frenzy" that must have been pervasive over the summer and fall of 1857.

Not only were there the seven books, there was the false authorship claim in July, two songs in August and three more by the end of the year including a schottische and a polka, a farce play at the Laura Keane's New Theatre in September, and a paper doll called "American Lady with Something to Wear" before the end of the year. By the fall of 1857, not only could you read your favorite "Nothing" book, but you could head out to see a "Nothing" play, sing a "Nothing" song, and play with your "Nothing" paper dolls!

And it wasn't over. The next few years following 1857 brought a dialogue, a wonderful color painting of Flora M'Flimsey (Butler's main character), stereographs, Flora M'Flimsey dolls, and more editions of the *Nothing to Wear* book. In 1868 there was even a poem by Peter Pasquil dedicated to "The Bishops of Oxford and Salisbury" titled *Nothing to Pray to; or, Flora McFlimsey's Rescue from Ritualism and Rome*.³⁰ Mister Butler probably had no idea that his "little poem" would set off such a widespread frenzy.

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1. *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. I, No. 6, Feb. 7, 1857, p. 84.
2. Gardner, Ralph D. *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*. 1964. Mendota, IL: The Wayside Press, p. 443.
3. Wolven, R.A. *Much Ado About "Nothings."* Colum-

(Continued on Page 10)

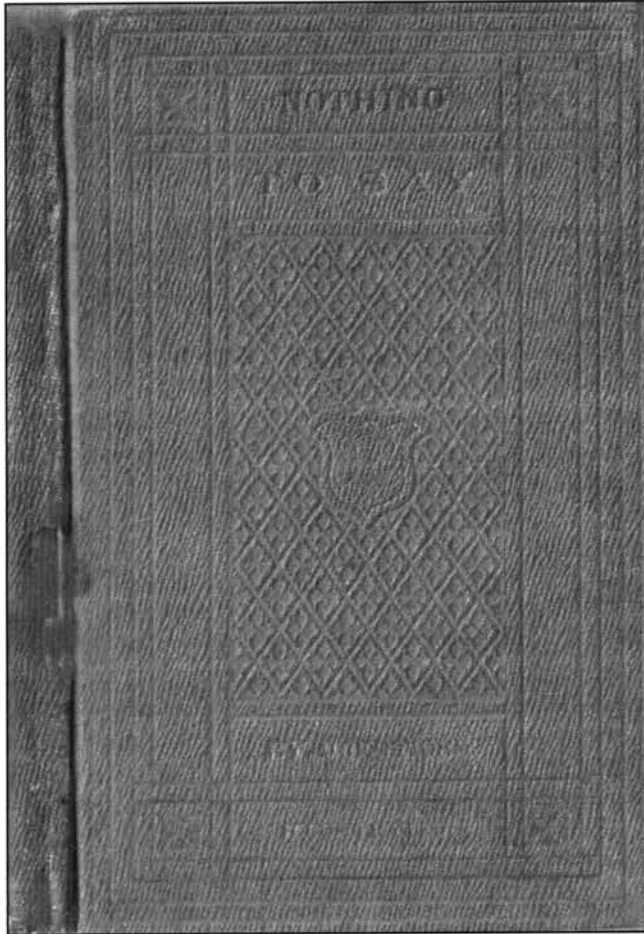


Fig. 9: *Nothing to Say* by "Q. K. Philander Doesticks" (Mortimer Q. Thompson), published Sept. 5, 1857. This very descriptive ad at right (Fig. 10) appeared in *The New York Times* and other daily newspapers.

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy

The 1857 books and more

(Continued from Page 9)

Library Columns, Vol. 37, No. 1, November 1987, pp. 21-29.

4. Anonymous. *Nothing To Wear: An Episode of City Life*, Rudd & Carleton, 1857.

5. *Newsboy*, Vol. XX, June-July 1982, Nos. 11, 12, pp. 8-24.

6. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXIV, June 13, 1857, p. 376.

THE GREAT BOOK BY DOESTICKS.
DOESTICKS.
DOESTICKS.
(His last and verily his best.)
NOTHING TO SAY:

Being
A Poetic Satire on Snobbery, which has
"NOTHING TO DO," with "NOTHING TO
WEAR."

SPLENDIDLY ILLUSTRATED,
and printed on tinted paper from the finest
designs ever made by McLennan, whose fame
as comic designer is unequalled.

Price, elegantly bound in cloth, uniform
with "NOTHING TO WEAR," 50 cents.

THE GREAT RACE
for the authorship of "NOTHING TO WEAR,"
not yet being decided, the stakeholders, Messrs.
RUDD & CARLTON, have determined, during
the pendency of this important contest, to
place once more upon the course the two tried
nags and popular favorites,

DOESTICKS and McLENNAN,
who will run one more heat on the Literary
Track, for

A PURSE OF \$50,000,
which it is hoped will be made up for their
benefit by the disinterested public. Full partic-
ulars of this exciting affair will be publish-
ed in a superb pictorial volume entitled

"NOTHING TO SAY,"
written on a bet, in an hour and three quar-
ters, with his boots off, his feet in a pail of
warm water, and one hand tied over his head,
by the immortal

DOESTICKS, P. B.
Embellished with a quantity of
ELEGANT ILLUSTRATIONS,
by JOHN McLENNAN, did by that comic artist in
eighty minutes, during the intervals of jump-
ing eleven rail fences, with a fishpole in each
hand, and a string of trout hanging from the
back of his neck.

INTRODUCTION.
I.—Q. K. P. Doesticks—of No-Hall, No where,
No Castle, No Villa, No Place, Court or Ter-
race;

Who didn't write "Junius," or "Nothing to
Wear;"

Who never have visited London or Paris;
Who am not a phantom, a myth, or a mystery,

But a *homo* as solid as any of history,
As real as Anthony, Caesar, or Brutus,

A wide-awake Yankee, so "variation
cute" as

To always write Nothings, while Nothings
will pay,

Am the Author of this Nothing—Nothing to
Say.

* * * * *

Mias P*** I've a favor to ask—if 'tis true
That "Nothing to Wear," and "Nothing to Do,"

And "Nothing to Eat," were all written by
you—

Let these three Nothings content you I
pray,

Say nothing yourself—leave me "Nothing
to Say."

* * * * *

100,000 COPIES

of this work will be sold as fast as they are
called for, and the cash sent in to guard
against speculators. No more copies will be
sold to any one man than he can pay for.

Sold by all Booksellers.

Copies of this Book will be sent by mail,
postage paid, to any part of the United States
on receipt of the price—50 cents in stamps.

RUDD & CARLTON, Publishers and Book-
sellers, No. 310 Broadway, New York.

PUBLISHED THIS DAY:
**THE WITTIEST BOOK OF THE SEASON,
 NOTHING TO EAT.**
 NOT BY THE AUTHOR OF "NOTHING TO WEAR,"
 and respectfully dedicated to all ladies
DYING WITH DYSPEPSIA.
 "WHERE FASHION AND POLLY ARE ALL OF A SUIT."
 By a Jolly Good-Natured Author.
 12mo., extra Cloth and Gilt,
WITH EIGHT FINE ILLUSTRATIONS.
 PRICE 50 CENTS
 The Author has dedicated this Book "To all Ladies
 dying of Dyspepsia," and as a frequent and profound
 mention of the risibles is said to be a cure for that very
 fashionable complaint.
 "NOTHING TO EAT"
 Will undoubtedly have a beautifully tonic effect upon
 all constipated patients.
 Published and for sale by
DICK & FITZGERALD, No. 18 Ann-st.
 Also for sale by all Booksellers.

Fig. 11: Advertisement in *The New York Times* for *Nothing to Eat*, published by Dick & Fitzgerald on Sept. 11, 1857, as the fourth book sequel. The author was anonymous. Despite reports to the contrary, Ralph Gardner states that Alger was not the author of this book.

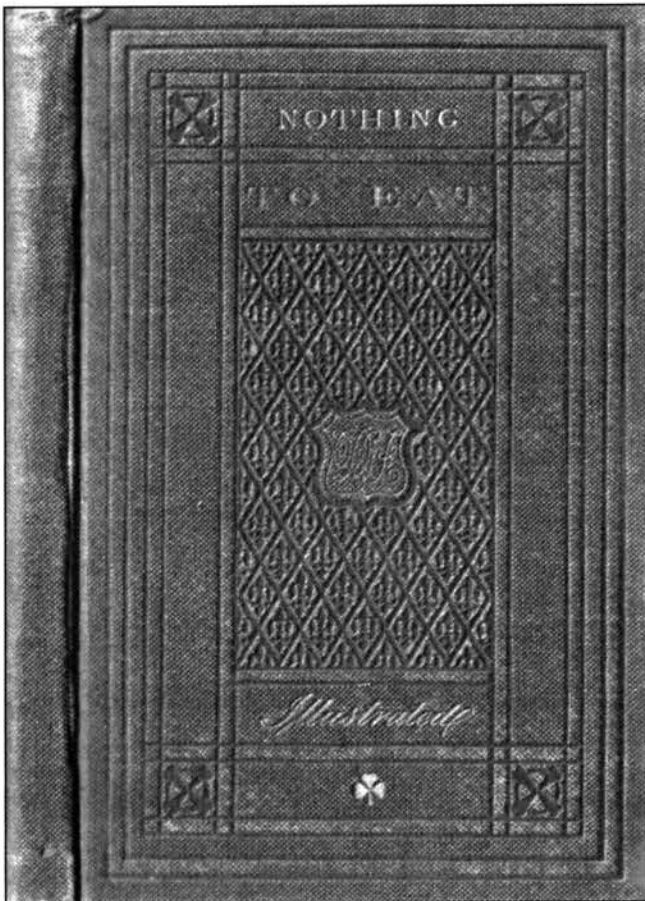



Fig. 12: Cover of the Dick & Fitzgerald edition of *Nothing to Eat*. This anonymously written book notes on the dedication page, "By a jolly good natured author."

NOTHING TO WEAR :
 AN EPISODE OF FASHIONABLE
 LIFE.



LONDON:
 SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND CO.
 47, LUDGATE HILL.
 1857.

Fig. 13: The title page for *Nothing to Wear: An Episode of Fashionable Life*, the fifth sequel in the "Nothing" series, was issued by Sampson Low, Son, and Co. of London, on Sept. 19, 1857.

7. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXIII, June 6, 1857, p. 362.
8. Website: www.Census.gov, 1860 & 1850.
9. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol III, No. XXVII, July 4, 1857, p. 421.
10. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXVIII, July 11, 1857, p. 439.
11. A Lady. *Nothing To Do: An Accompaniment to "Nothing To Wear,"* Wiley & Halsted, 1857.
12. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXX, July 25, 1857, p. 473.
13. *New York Daily Times*, Vol VI, No. 1828, July 29, 1857, p. 6.
14. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXXIV, August 22, 1857, p. 535.
15. Anonymous. *Nothing To Do: A Tilt At Our Best*
(Continued on Page 12)

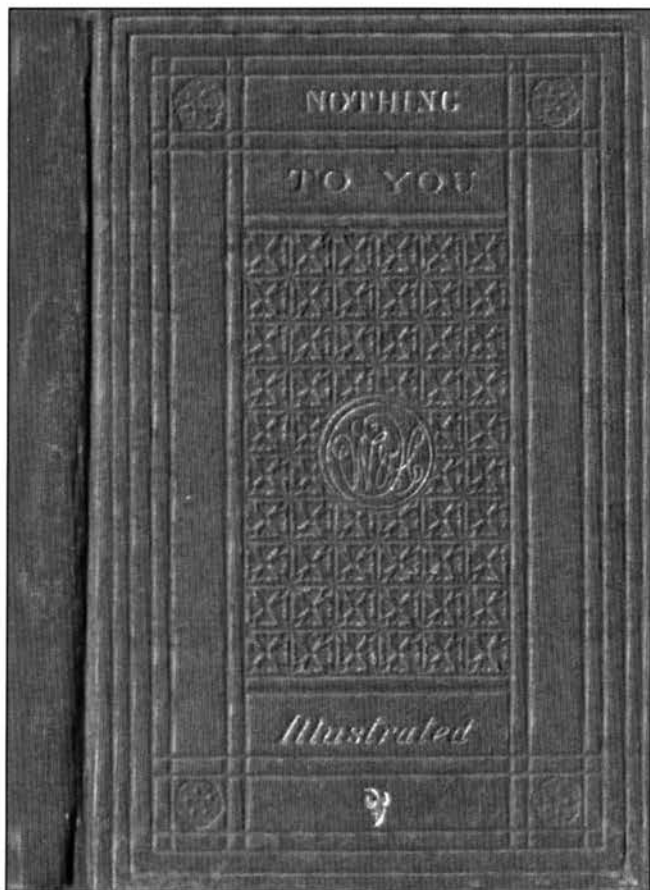


Fig. 14: *Nothing to You*, last of the known book sequels, published by Wiley & Halsted. It was announced for Sept. 26, 1857 (see Figs. 15, 16) but not released until Dec. 24.

Nothing to Wear: A frenzy The 1857 books and more

(Continued from Page 9)

Society, James French & Co., 1857.

16. *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. I, No. 36, Sept. 5, 1857, p. 575.
17. Doesticks, Q. K. Philander, P.B. *Nothing To Say: A Slight Slap at Mobocratic Snobbery, which has "Nothing To Do" with "Nothing To Wear."* Rudd & Carleton, 1857.
18. *New York Daily Times*, Sept. 5, 1857, Vol. VI, No. 1861, p. 5.
19. *New York Daily Times*, Sept. 11, 1857, p. 3.
20. Anonymous. *Nothing To Eat*. Dick & Fitzgerald, 1857.
21. Gardner, p. 444.
22. Davies, Richard A. *Inventing Sam Slick: A Biography*

New Announcements since our Past Issue.

Wiley & Halsted.

Nothing to You; or, Mind Your Own Business; an answer to "Nothings," in general, and "Nothing to Wear," in particular.

NEW YORK.

WILEY & HALSTED,
351 BROADWAY, N. Y.,

Will shortly publish

NOTHING TO YOU;
OR MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

An Answer to "Nothings" in general, and
"Nothing to Wear" in particular.
Uniform in size and binding with "Nothing
to Wear" and "Nothing to Do."

PRICE, FIFTY CENTS.

"It is every man's business at once to defend
The fair fame of the ladies, on whom we depend
For so much of life's pleasure."

Fig. 15 (top): Ad for *Nothing to You* in American Publishers' Circular on Sept. 26, 1857, p. 615. Fig 16 (above): American Publishers' Circular ad, Sept. 26, 1857. p. 618.

of Thomas Chandler Haliburton, 2nd Ed. 2005. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

23. Anonymous. *Nothing To Wear: An Episode of Fashionable Life*. 1857. London: Sampson, Low, Son, and Co.

24. *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. I, No. 32, Aug. 8, 1857, p. 498.

25. Knot-Rab, *Nothing To You; or, Mind Your Own Business. In answer to "Nothings" in general, and "Nothing To Wear" in particular*. Wiley and Halsted, 1857.

26. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. III, No. XXXIX, Sept. 26, 1857, pp. 615 and 618.

27. *The New York Times*, Vol. VII, No. 1955, Dec. 24, 1857, p. 2, col. 2.

28. *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, Vol. VI, No. I, Jan. 2, 1858, p. 4.

29. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. XV, No. XC, pp. 746-753.

30. Pasquil, Peter. *Nothing to Pray to; or, Flora McFlimsy's Rescue from Ritualism and Rome*. Geo. Jno. Stevenson, 1868.

Another "Nothing." We supposed the whole tribe of Nothings, which were so suddenly brought into existence by *Nothing to Wear*, had come to an end. But we have another in the same vein, though not so much of a parody as its predecessors, entitled *Nothing to You*. *Nothing to You* is published by WILEY & HALSTED, and illustrated with wood cuts from drawings by J. R. HOWARD. The illustrations are very cleverly done, and show more invention than the text. This lively little *jeu d'esprit* professes to be "an answer to 'Nothings' in general, and to *Nothing to Wear* in particular, by KNOT-RAB." The verse is irregular, but modulated after the original "Nothing." It contains some clever hits, and its moral is that both Floras and Harrys are better than they seem to be, and would do better if they would attend to their own business, and not be so zealous in finding out and exposing each other's infirmities. The original "Nothing" has had more parodies, and achieved a greater success than any other American poem, not excepting even *Hisswaika*. Not the least remarkable event connected with *Nothing to Wear* was the dispute about its authorship, and we believe that the friends of the young lady who claimed to have written the first and concluding lines of the poem still believe in her story, and as a vindication of her pretensions a poem by heris shortly to be published in book form.

Fig. 17: The New York Times review gave high marks for the illustrations, saying they were "very cleverly done," but they gave a mixed review of the text. The book was listed in the "List of New Works" section of the American Publishers' Circular of Jan. 2, 1858 (see Fig. 18, below) and in the "New Publications" section of the same issue of the APC, but Wiley & Halsted's advertisement two pages later had no mention of the book.

Nothing to You; or, Mind Your Own Business. In answer to "Nothings" in General, and "Nothing to Wear" in particular. By Knot-Rab. With Illustrations by J. H. Howard. 16mo. pp. 68. [Wiley & Halsted.] . . . 50

MEMBERSHIP

New member

Connie Remkus (PF-1154)
5027 South 178th St.
Omaha, NE 68135
(773) 283-9898

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

was released and sent home Christmas morning.

Frank Quillen joined the Horatio Alger Society in August 1999 at my urging, since one of his major hobbies (he had several eclectic interests) was the collecting of juvenile series books.

His presentations at the PCA conferences were well-researched and included topics and authors often "off the beaten path." Enid Blyton, the prolific English writer, was one of his favorites. More in my area of interest was Capwell Wyckoff (1903-1953), the author of the Mercer Boys Series, which I started reading with I was about 12 years old, shortly after I discovered Tom Swift. When I started re-reading the Mercer Boys later in life, I was stunned by their quality of writing.

Frank's interest in Wyckoff was so great that he got to know the author's daughter, who shared memories of her father and helped to provide Frank with several unpublished stories. We published one of them in *Newsboy* (July-August 2006 issue), titled "Drumbeat at Trenton," describing General Washington's defeat of Hessian troops at that famous Revolutionary War battle. It was its first known appearance in print.

In another biographical sketch of the author, several never released family photos of Wyckoff were kindly provided by Frank for publication in *Newsboy*.

Wyckoff's 1930s "single" titles for A.L. Burt such as *The Sea-Runners' Cache* (1935), *The North Point Cabin Mystery* (1931) and *The Mystery at Lake Retreat* (1931) are among his best work. Once you started reading, you stayed up all night. They are that good. Unfortunately, as collectibles these stand-alone titles are very scarce, their copyrights not renewed and the Great Depression doing the rest. Luckily for us, the 10-volume Mercer Boys and four-volume Mystery Hunters Series were reprinted by Saalfield and other publishers.

Another of Frank's hobbies was dogs (he raised a number of breeds over several decades); also, he loved music, particularly operettas. Nearly every summer he would drive a considerable distance to attend the Ohio Light Opera festival at Wooster College, enjoying performances of works by Gilbert & Sullivan, Franz Lehár, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin and others.

Frank was a retired Professor of Philosophy at East Tennessee State University. Over the years, he suffered major health problems, including diabetes, which he never complained about. He will be greatly missed among his longtime Popular Culture Association and Horatio Alger Society colleagues.

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 2021:*

Jack Bales (PF-258)
 Glen Bontrager (PF-1007)
 James Brandon (PF-1139)
 Marlena E. Bremseth (PF-1123)
 Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)
 Harland H. Eastman (PF-128)
 Edward Evans (PF-1000)
 John Fogarty (PF-1022)
 Robert George (PF-489)
 William R. Gowen (PF-706)
 Richard B. Hoffman (PF-570)
 Liane Houghtalin (PF-699)
 Samuel T. Huang (PF-963)
 Robert G. Huber (PF-841)
 Brandon James (PF-1139)
 Debby Jones (PF-1092)
 Robert L. Kersch (PF-946)
 James King (PF-1126)
 Thomas P. Kline (PF-1054)
 Jeff Looney (PF-903)
 David A. Moulton (PF-541)
 Martin Mueller (PF-1020)
 Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)
 Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879)



Mary Ann Nyberg (PF-861)
 Robert Petitto (PF-1086)
 William D. Russell (PF-549)
 E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra (PF-788)
 Robert G. Sipes (PF-1067)
 Cary Sternick (PF-933)
 William Stone (PF-113)

Dilworth Strasser (PF-1061)
 Lee Switzer (PF-882)
 Peter C. Walther (PF-548)
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 Thomas P. Kline (PF-1054)
 Murray D. Levin (PF-851)
 Jeff Looney (PF-903)
 Michael Nabholz (PF-1146)
 Carol Nackenoff (PF-921)
 Robert Petitto (PF-1086)
 William D. Russell (PF-549)
 Robert G. Sipes (PF-1067)
 Peter C. Walther (PF-548)
 Donald K. Wedding (PF-1100)

If you made an S&S donation in 2021 and your name does not appear on this list, contact us at 1004 School St., Shelbyville, IN 46176 and we will list it in the March-April Newsboy.

Hugh McAlister's 'Worth While Books' series

An overlooked Horatio Alger-like gem

By Terry J. Booth (PF-1150)

(Second of two parts)

Saalfield's eight-book "Worth While Books" series (aka "Mystery and Adventure" series) presented stories of underprivileged boys who achieved success by perseverance and hard work in the Horatio Alger tradition. Each book addressed an important technology or industry, and most contained much research to help a reader understand it. Part 1 reviewed the series' publishing history and how the Depression and changing tastes altered its marketing. This concluding section has a synopsis of each book, and documents the identity of the authors behind the "Hugh McAlister" house name.

Book summaries

Below are short synopses of each of this series' titles. A review of any of them will show they contain a great deal of historical and occupational research. They thus differ from many other series of their time, rarely relying on the more typical formula in which a local bully or gang of thieves creates many chapters' worth of troubles. The authors also paid close attention to then-popular current events, as did many of the other successful series. Since the rebranding of the series extended to each title's front-flap plot summaries, some of those changes are also noted below since they add insight into Saalfield's new vision. These promotional changes reduced the emphasis on hard work and perseverance, and added teasers extolling the excitement, mystery and adventure in the book.

A Viking of the Sky: Young Hal Dane supports his mom and physically challenged uncle by driving a rickety delivery truck.



Spending his spare time building gliders and dreaming of flying, he saves the life of a famous pilot and is granted a scholarship to aviation school. But he needs more money so keeps delivering until a chance encounter with a barnstorming pilot offers him more money and a chance to fly. Many adventures follow, and with his savings he is able to enter the flight school. Amidst new adventures, he is hired by the Wiljohn Airplane Co. after saving the

THE WORTH WHILE BOOKS FOR BOYS



By Hugh McAlister

Patterning his heroes after some of America's most successful men, Hugh McAlister spins stories about the different industries and professions.

There is always the fine, stalwart boy who builds on his own efforts. There is sometimes the spice of mystery, the lift of humor, but always adventure, hard work, discouragement, indomitable persistence, success!

These stories for boys (and their fathers) are based on the ideals America cherishes for her young manhood.

A VIKING OF THE SKY

The call of adventure in Hal Dane's blood urged him to learn aeronautics "from the ground up"—he became a Viking of the sky.

CONQUEROR OF THE HIGHROAD

Sam Randall's "mystery car" was ready. In the night the shop doors softly rolled open, the car, shrouded in a strange disguise, sped off—conqueror of the highroad.

FLAMING RIVER

The Big Gusher comes in—then thirty-five miles of oil in flames on the river—loss and despair. But today McDougal's prospectors roam every continent, his wells gush in every quarter of the globe, his tankers ply every sea.

THE FLIGHT OF THE SILVER SHIP

Three and one-half years of apprenticeship at the hangar were as nothing to David Ellison the day he brought the majestic Silver Ship, the mighty dirigible, back to the mooring mast, for she held the record for world flight.

STEVE HOLWORTH OF THE OLDHAM WORKS

Hard work, study, knowledge of production methods, and a sympathetic understanding of the men he works with in the Oldham Works bring Steve Holworth to the highest place in the rubber industry.

STAND BY

"F-O-Y-N! F-O-Y-N!"—just four letters. Out of the frozen North came the mystery message. Boys will thrill to the adventures of Renaud of the Radio.

THAT BOY AT ROARING BROOK FARM

Gage Rodney liked "the land." He would take abandoned Roaring Brook Farm and make it pay—and he did.

SEA GOLD

Speed McGee risked a mud-burial on the bottom and fought the "tiger of the sea" but solved the greatest of ocean mysteries.

These Books are Cloth Bound, with Tinted Top, a Frontispiece and have a Colored Jacket. Additional Titles in Preparation.

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY
AKRON, OHIO - - - - NEW YORK

owner's son. Part test-pilot, part aircraft designer and part inventor, the author takes several chapters to help the reader understand the mechanics and science of flying. Then, a chance arises to win two international prizes, and two advance design planes are built. Hal's auto gyro wins the "Best new safety design" award.⁷ Then, his sleek "Wind Bird"⁸ wins the \$35,000 prize and his associated worldwide fame for being the first to fly the Pacific Ocean non-stop, San Francisco to Tokyo.

Dust jacket plot summary changes: The first DJ started with "[teenager] Hal Dane has his own way to make. But he has the will to succeed ... then comes a course at a flying school." This was replaced with "The call of adventure in Hal Dane's blood urged him to the Rivers of the Wind," adding that Hal had barnstormed

(Continued on Page 16)

Hugh McAlister's 'Worth While Books' series

(Continued from Page 15)

as a stunt pilot "before realizing his dream" by entering aviation school.

Conqueror of the Highroad: Growing up in horse-and-buggy days. Sam Randall believes in the future of horseless carriages. He starts off losing control of a hand-made motorized platform powered by steam. Other mishaps lead to improved carriage designs and gasoline engines. A big race in a neighboring town causes a birth of creativity, but several chapters of difficulties suggest he won't get there. Sam makes the race, friends start believing in his cars, but short on funds he starts a taxi service from the train station, supplanting horse buggies. An early customer likes the car so much he buys it, and Sam builds a new design. It works even better, and after helping save a burning home and speed



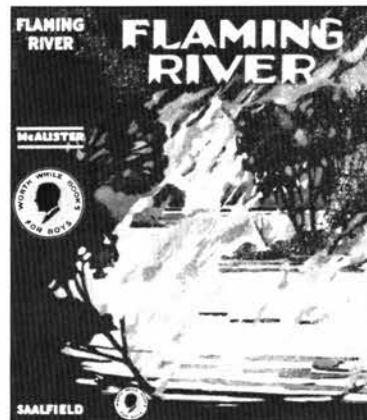
life-saving emergency medical care, several community leaders offer to help Sam build an auto plant.

But after two years and meager sales, all are discouraged — except Sam. He comes up with an inspiring new design, and a plan to show it off at an upcoming widely publicized international race. For 500 miles over two days, Sam battles obstacles, other cars and bad roads, he wins both the race and financiers eager to buy hundreds of his cars. The book thus provides not only adventures, but explains the rise of the auto industry.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ ends with "[this tells] the story of the development of the crude, clumsy gasoline buggy into the high-powered motor car of today." Dropped, then adding "Overcoming the objection of his older brother and mother, [Sam] entered one of the first auto races ever held. He [then designed and built] new cars [to try] in the big racing events."

Flaming River: This story also starts in horse-and-buggy days. Rod McDougal's family owned 200 acres of farmland dating back to a 1791 Revolutionary War grant. Their land has a natural spring which also seeps crude oil. Rod, a self-starter, starts off packaging and selling a

couple barrels of oil for medical ailments. Tough competition has him next selling oil for lamps and developing a new lamp design and refining process. Success leads to



a need for more oil and his improving drilling techniques.

Rod's efforts parallel each step in the growth and complexity of the petroleum industry. He adds river boats and wagons to carry increased production and learns how to "fish" for broken drill bits. A gusher is hit so big the oil runs down to the river before being controlled. Looking for new markets, a lubricating oil for railroads is developed. Then disaster — lightning strikes the gusher and produces a stream of fire down to the river. After recovering, the title to his family's oil lands is questioned — only a long-lost linen map can save it. While the court case drags on, Rod builds a pipeline despite right-of-way and construction problems. Then, a chance meeting recalls some long forgotten papers held by a distant relative, and the linen map is found. But it has no value when its landmarks can't be found — until a way to restore old markers is discovered and the family's title is proven.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ ended with "The Story of Rod McDowell is the story of the petroleum industry with all its thrills and dangers." Dropped, with this added: "There followed a mad rush to the oilfields, lawsuits over property rights and a search for an elusive 'linen map.'"

The Flight of the Silver Ship: David Ellison always dreamed of flying a dirigible.⁹ But his father — an aviator killed in WWI — left little money, and his mother had but a small income. So, David was planning to get a job on graduating prep school so his sisters could



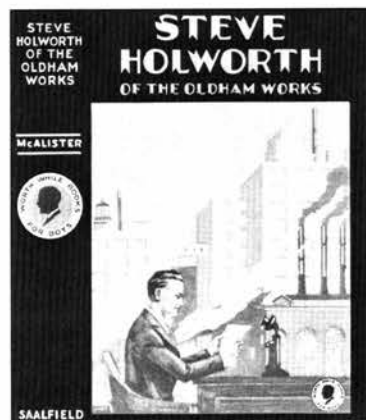
attend school. Fortunately, Goodlow and Co. in Ayre, Ohio, announced a four-year paid apprenticeship program, part of its growing dirigible program.¹⁰ David is accepted, a rich self-promoter he is not, and David graduates with flying colors just as a huge new dirigible is completed.

Its wealthy purchaser (who wants to beat the Graf Zeppelin's round-the-world speed record), hires David as assistant Captain.

When the Captain is injured, David pilots the ship through a fierce storm, and is promoted. Many chapters follow chronicling welcomes to major world countries, including Japan and royal treatment from the emperor's family. But they trail the speed record until David and his chief mechanic friend invent an engine booster that gets them back to Ayre to claim the prize. David is rewarded by partnering with the blimp's owner in a company to commercialize his invention.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ paragraph stated "David Ellison [had] little money but much stalwart pride and sturdy ambition." Replaced with "David Ellison had but one ambition — to pilot a huge silver airship, to hear the roar of the engines, to feel the rushing air."

Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works: Holworth rises from a modest rural home, and commits to college despite his contractor father falling on hard times. After several adventures he solves a local bank robbery, saving the robber's life but becoming his enemy because of a



misunderstanding. At college, he works to pay his way, makes close friends, and gains much advice about life. His best friend, who stayed home to help start an auto dealership, suggests he try an auto accessory firm, and Holworth finds an entry-level job at Oldham [Tire] Works

upon graduation. There follow numerous encounters with workers, bosses, mentors and others, all suggesting how one's behavior and dedication leads to promotion.

When he encounters his earlier robber again, he gains his allegiance in a series of exciting encounters and the two help thwart a communist union mob intent on closing down Oldham. Then comes a fight for control of the company, in which Holworth's dedication, character and friends help him rise to be Oldham's head.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ noted that "Each year thousands of American boys choose to go into industry rather than to enter a profession." Revised to "Neither ... a bank bandit nor the narrow escape at Hell Yawns daunt the determination of the young man to make his place in the world."

Stand By: A youthful wireless operator from poor rural origins joins a mining venture seeking Arctic gold

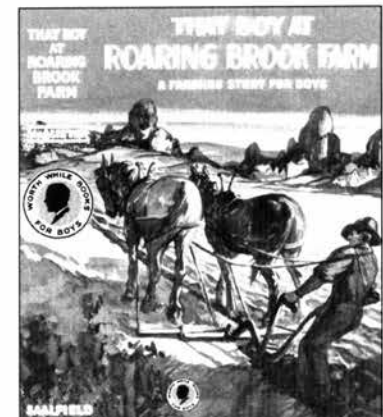
left by a prior venture. But first, numerous electrical phenomena are described, including Lee Renaud's experiments with his uncle's crystal wheel, and reading old books. He befriends a boy with infantile paralysis, interests him in the experiments, and soon the other village boys join in. There are experiments with telegraphy (saving a life with an SOS), wireless transmission, radios and the construction of batteries. When a flood hits his rural community, his crude



portable radio brings help, its design becoming a patentable discovery. He is recruited for the Arctic expedition aboard a dirigible.¹¹ After describing the Nardak,¹² its mission and crew, adventures follow. There are massive Arctic storms and encounters with wolves. Then, a major storm, and Renaud and others drop to the polar ice with damaged equipment, and the damaged dirigible landing miles away. But "Not for nothing had Lee Renaud grown up with radio."¹³ He jury-rigs a transmitter and broadcasts their location near Foyen Island, Norway. Finally heard after great effort, all are saved and the Nardak and Renaud fly home as heroes.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ noted "Veterans of Arctic exploration had objected to taking [young] Renaud [wireless expert] on the dangerous mission, but the Captain insisted the enthusiasm of youth would help 'carry on.'" Dropped, but added "The great gold-seeking dirigible Nardak lay wrecked in the frozen north. Hope had been abandoned by the crew — but not by Lee."

The Boy at Roaring Brook Farm: Young Gage Rodney uses a failing old Ford in search of work, picks up a disheveled stranger in a dark-night rainstorm. Gage promises not to tell, the stranger hops off, leaving a \$10 bill. Seeking shelter, Gage finds a vacant farmhouse, but sheriff's deputies, looking for an escaped criminal, find his car. After questioning, they allow Gage to stay since



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Hugh McAlister's 'Worth While Books' series

(Continued from Page 17)

the farm is abandoned. Then, Gage meets the farm's owner, who offers him room and board in exchange for farm work.

During many chapters of gaining friends and farm skills, no one will tell him why the farm was abandoned. When he donates the \$10 bill to the local library, it turns out it is a banknote issued by the bank robbed by the criminal Gage befriended.

After several chapters of angry local citizens, Gage's new friends convince the sheriff the banknote didn't constitute evidence against Gage. He then follows agricultural school, gaining more farm skills, a lost girlfriend, and — finally — learning the farm's owner once had a son who worked the farm, then disappeared, and likely was the bank robber (using an alias) Gage befriended. *A la Alger*, Gage becomes a "second son," is granted the farm, and marries the girlfriend denied him when his reputation was in question.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ extolled "hard work and careful spending," with entering Agricultural School the reason for the farm's success. That theme was scrapped and replaced with the hero being credited with solving "the mystery that had caused the farm to remain unused for many years."

Sea Gold: Speed McGee, an orphan, joined a local sea salvage crew at age 15, and learns to dive and work shirtless at 50-foot depths. The book pays great attention to describing how various wrecks are raised and the dangers of diving. When the local crew survives a storm but loses

its captain, Steve's experience lands a job on a bigger salvager whose crew uses diving suits to salvage deeper wrecks. Step by step the reader learns the diving business and experiences all of the dangers and excitement of undersea work. There are encounters with storms, a giant octopus and a

massive shark. There is also a questionable tale of sunken treasure. After McGee learns the diving and salvage business he gains friends and earns money enough to

buy their own salvage ship to search for that treasure. After further deep-sea challenges they find the treasure ship 300 feet down and raise it, McGee again nearly losing his life. There is excitement on every page, and great descriptions of the equipment and business of salvaging wrecks.

Dust jacket changes: The first DJ had "Bare skinned [young Speed McGee] could do the forty- and fifty-foot depths [but] longed to master modern diving apparatus, longed to plumb far vaster deeps." The second DJ replaced it with "this story is stocked with thrills. It tells of the heroism of fearless men."

More about "Hugh McAlister"

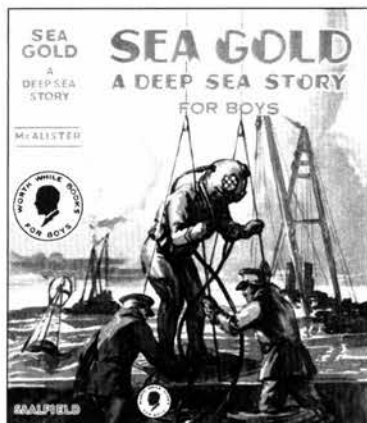
The Alison sisters: Few collectors are aware that this series' author was not really Hugh McAlister, but was a publisher's pen name adopted by a pair of collaborating sisters from Alabama. Alice Alison Lide (1890-1955) and Margaret Alison Johansen (1896-1959) wrote some 30 books over 35 years, the majority of them dealing with young adults overcoming challenging circumstances.

Recall also that Saalfield's 1932 catalog had prospectively named the sisters as the authors of a ninth — but never published — **Worth While Books** edition title. The sisters were a cut above other series authors of their time, being runners-up to the American Library Association's Newbery Medal in 1931. The prestigious honor, initiated in 1922, is awarded annually to the most outstanding children's book published the preceding year. Their cited honoree, among the runners-up, was the now-scarce book, *Ood-Le-Uk*, which followed an Alaskan Eskimo boy who overcame great obstacles to found an Alaska-Siberia trading company.

Published the same year as the first six McAlister titles, its theme of a disadvantaged youth overcoming challenges to achieve success by perseverance and self-reliance is strikingly similar to their "Worth While Books" series heroes. *Ood-Le-Uk's* theme can be seen as a reflection of the Alger ethic, as can that of many of their later books. Except for Oliver Optic and Horatio Alger, few other series authors can claim as high a literary recognition by the library community of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 1930 **Alabama Historical Quarterly** had several paragraphs about the sisters, including:

Four novels by the sisters, Mrs. Alice Alison Lide and Mrs. Margaret Alison Johansen, have just been published. These Alabama women authors have used the pen name of "Hugh McAllister [sic]." The books are brought out by the Saalfield Publishing Co., Akron, Ohio. The titles are: "A Viking of the Sky," "Stand By — The Arctic on



the Air,” “Conqueror of the High Road,” and “Flaming River.” These books are for young people and deal with modern scientific inventions. A masculine *nom de plume* was assumed at the request of the publishers as boys do not like to read adventure stories written by women.¹⁴

Many of the sisters’ manuscripts and correspondence were donated to the University of Alabama library.¹⁵ One letter in that archive mentions *Sea Gold*, a McAlister title. The library’s “Alabama Authors” website also includes bios of each sister along with a list of each of their own as well as joint publications.¹⁶ Not noted, there is mystery story by Johansen in the Nov. 1, 1923 issue of *Black Mask*, “Mrs. Vandam’s Diamonds.”

The three McAlister **Air Adventure Series** titles can be downloaded from the Internet Archive website,¹⁷ and at least eight of the sisters’ other books can be downloaded from the Internet Archive website, including *Ood-Le-Uk*.¹⁸ All eight McAlister titles are listed on the WorldCat website, with the identities of the libraries holding them.¹⁹

James A. Braden: While the University of Alabama Library, Wikipedia (citing the library) and several other sources currently assign authorship for all eight **Worth While Books** titles to the Alison sisters, that attribution requires revision. James D. Keeline (PF-898) recently provided the *Newsboy* editor and this writer with information concerning a 2001 **Yellowback Library** article documenting that two volumes were instead written by James A[ndrew] Braden.²⁰ Braden (1872-1954) was also a Saalfield author who had written several series for the publisher under his own name.²¹

Braden’s authorship of *Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works* (#5 in the original order of the series and #7 in the **Mystery and Adventure** series) is documented in a May 19, 1930 *Akron Beacon Journal* article.²² In it, Braden (who lived in Akron) is stated to be writing “another book” for Saalfield to be titled *Steve Holworth of the Olden* [sic] *Works*. It also states that the book would be included in Saalfield’s **Worth While Books** series for “youths of college age.”

Braden’s authorship of *That Boy at Roaring Brook Farm* (#7 in the original listing and #1 in the later listing) is established by a presentation copy he made to his sister (grandmother to one of the **Yellowback Library** authors). The author’s name on the title page had been altered (surely by Braden) to read “Jas. A Braden ‘Ghostwriter’ for” Hugh McAlister.²³ Clearly, Braden also authored this volume as well as took pride in it.

There is little question, however, that the Alison sisters authored the remaining six books in the series. Early original documents and accounts cited in the **Yellow-**

Worth While Books For Boys title order
(Includes copyright dates)

Title	Copyright date
1. A Viking of the Sky.....	1930
2. Conqueror of the Highroad	1930
3. Flaming River.....	1930
4. The Flight of the Silver Ship.....	1930
5. Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works* ..	1930
6. Stand By	1930
7. That Boy at Roaring Brook Farm*	1931
8. Sea Gold.....	1931

Mystery and Adventure Series title order

Title	Copyright date
1. The Mystery at Roaring Brook Farm*	1931
2. Flaming River.....	1930
3. Conqueror of the Highroad	1930
4. Stand By	1930
5. A Viking of the Sky.....	1930
6. The Flight of the Silver Ship.....	1930
7. Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works* ..	1930
8. Sea Gold.....	1931

* These two titles were authored by James A. Braden. The remaining six titles were written by Alice Alison Lide and Margaret Alison Johansen.

back Library article assign six, not eight, titles to them, with *Steve Holworth of the Oldham Works* and *That Boy at Roaring Brook Farm* not among them. There is also mention of a six-book contract to be delivered within a year — surely the Saalfield books — which had been signed on condition the sisters could share authorship.²⁴ The Alison sisters’ link to the series is further strengthened by the last name of the series author — McAlister — being the name of the Scottish clan from whom the Alison family descended.²⁵

Last but not least, the writing style in *Holworth* and *Farm* differs from the other six titles by favoring formulaic enemies, altercations and a romantic interest. The sisters’ work exhibits a great deal more research, dialogue and story development.

NOTES

7. The auto gyro was a vertical takeoff aircraft popularized (but never commercialized) by a 1930 Thomas Edison partnership with Pitcairn Aircraft. That aircraft was also the inspiration for Eustace Adams’ 1930 book *The Flying Windmill*, one of the **Andy Lane Flying Series** (G&D, 1928-1932). Fred Erisman, in his *Boys’ Books, Boys’ Dreams, and the Mystique of Flight* (Fort Worth,

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Hugh McAlister's 'Worth While Books' series

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Texas: TCU Press, 2006) noted how many aircraft series authors — including Adams — scoured current periodicals to incorporate the latest aircraft designs in their stories. Unfortunately, Erisman's bibliography failed to identify Hugh McAlister as one of the authors who followed new aviation discoveries of the time, as one means to make their books sound authentic and cutting edge.

8. Lindbergh's 1927 solo transatlantic flight led to many boys' series authors describing how their hero then conquered the Pacific. McAlister justified Dane's feat based on a powerful new engine that used 25 per cent less fuel than Lindbergh, the use of oxygen to fly higher to reach thinner air, a sleeker more aerodynamic design using lighter weight materials, and new or better instruments. It was thus a careful, authentic-sounding design.

9. The Graf Zeppelin captured wide public attention by flying nonstop around the world in 1929. Starting and ending in Lakehurst New Jersey, it stopped at Friedrichshafen, Tokyo and Los Angeles. *The Flight of the Silver Ship* mirrors that trip.

10. An obvious reference to Akron's Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. blimp division, then actively building observation blimps for the military.

11. Dirigibles were a great aviation attraction in 1930, the Graf Zeppelin having initiated transatlantic air travel in 1928. While the Hindenburg disaster proved fatal to commercial airship travel, it did not occur until 1937.

12. The dirigible was being built in Akron, Ohio. Interestingly, Saalfield's headquarters were in Akron.

13. Quote is from page 212.

14. **The Billboard**. *Alabama Historical Quarterly*; Fall Issue, 1930; pp. 332-3.

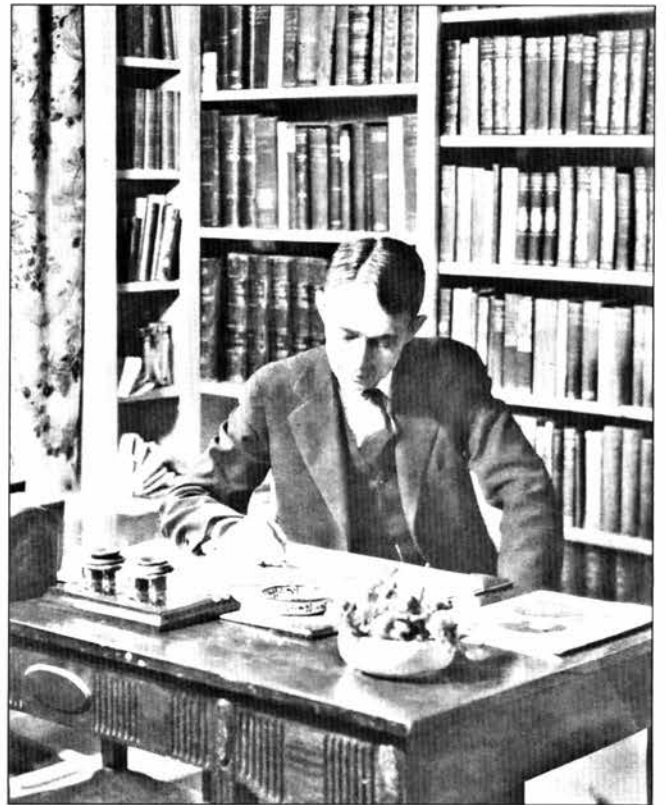
15. Webpage: <www.archives.lib.ua.edu/repositories/3/resources/4620>

16. Webpage for Alice Alison Lide: <www.lib.ua.edu/Alabama_Authors/?p=1564> Webpage for Margaret Alison Johansen: <www.lib.ua.edu/Alabama_Authors/?p=1414>

17. Webpage: <www.archive.org/search.php?query=hugh+mcalister>

18. Webpage: <www.archive.org/search.php?query=margaret+alison+johansen>

19. Webpage: <www.worldcat.org/identities/lcnno2003089317/>



James A. Braden, shown working on one of his manuscripts in the early 1900s. In addition to his two titles in the Worth While Books series, he authored nine other juvenile books for Saalfield: the five-volume Auto Boys Series (1908-1913) and four books (1902-1907) with Native American themes (see note 21).

20. Lee Price Arellano and Julie W. Boardman. "Who Was Hugh McAlister?" *Yellowback Library*, No. 209 (November 2001). pp. 5-15.

21. James A. Braden was the author of several books grouped into various series issued under his own name by Saalfield. Each series is described in Mattson & Davis' *A Collector's Guide to Hardcover Boys' Series Books* as follows: MAD 04200 **Auto Boys Series**, 15000 **Boys' Pioneer Series**; MAD 15400 **Braden Series**, and MAD 32200 **Indian Series**. Saalfield's catalogs for 1932 and 1933 both identified "Col. George Durston" as the author of *Wings of Destiny*, one of the never published last two books proposed for the **Worth While Books** series (the other being *Mystery Wings*, which was to be authored by the Alison sisters). Durston was a publisher's house name.

22. Arellano and Boardman, pp. 7-9.

23. Arellano and Boardman, pp. 6-8 (page 8 has photocopy of title page).

24. Arellano and Boardman, p. 12.

25. Arellano and Boardman, p. 14.