



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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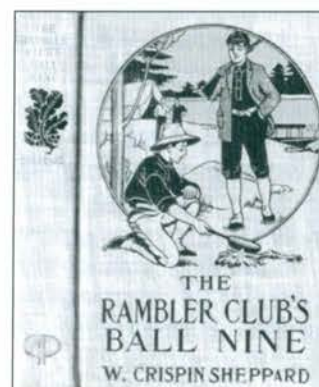
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President's column

I've been reflecting on the terrible war in Ukraine, trying to conjure up something useful to say about it in this column. As you sit comfortably in a safe place reading this publication, spare a thought for the Ukrainians, who are fighting the brutal onslaught of a barbaric enemy. One who would rob them of their autonomy and freedom. One who intentionally kills civilians, even children, in a cold, calculated campaign of terror. The news is disheartening, depressing, even demoralizing. If you're like me, you're probably thinking, is there anything one can do to help?

Charities assisting Ukraine and its refugees are plentiful and in desperate need of monetary donations. Do your own homework and choose for yourself, but among those ranked especially high for financial efficiency are UNICEF, World Vision (Christian), Samaritan's Purse, Heart to Heart International, JDC (American Jewish Distribution Committee), GlobalGiving and Americares.

Other quality charities assisting various aspects of the crisis include The International Committee of the Red Cross, World Central Kitchen, Kidsave, Care, Maya's Hope (special-needs children), Global Empowerment Mission, Mercy Corps, the WHO (World Health Organization) Foundation, United Way Worldwide, USA for UNHCR [Airbnb will match donations], International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Namati (legal), Direct Relief, Alight (formerly ARC), Medical Teams International, United Nations World Food Programme, (WFP)/World Food Program USA, Outright Action International (LGBT), People in Need (Czech Rep.), Humanity and Inclusion (disability rights) and the International Medical Corps. Pets and refugees with pets are the focus of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Humane Society International.

Most (but not all) of these charities have specific Ukrainian relief funds to which one may donate. A few exist solely for the benefit of Ukraine, such as Razom for Ukraine, Nova Ukraine and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society.

Look at their websites to see what their focus is. Check out Charity Navigator, a web-site that evaluates and rates charities on their performance and efficiency. Also, find out if your employer or institution will match your funds.

Whatever you choose to do, please do something. The "60 Minutes" CBS television show recently interviewed Volodymyr Zelenskyy and he said of us: "Stand in front of the mirror every day and ask yourself, were you able

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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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The above rates apply to all **want ads**, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send 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.

Letters from Horatio – Part 4;

or, Alger calls the doctor

By Robert E. Kasper (PF-327)

It has been estimated that Horatio Alger, Jr. wrote approximately 30 letters every week during his literary career, although fewer than 200 are known today.¹ For the most part, Alger's letters fall neatly into two categories: responding to young readers for an autograph or pleading with his publishers for a royalty advance. There are, however, a few extant letters where Alger discusses medical issues regarding himself and others. This article will focus on three of them addressed to the same person.

* * *

Horatio Alger, Jr., the oldest of five children, died on July 18, 1899, at the age of 67. The average life expectancy of a white male born in the 1830s was just under 40 years of age, so in that respect Alger did reasonably well. He outlived three of his four siblings, with brother James dying at age 48, brother Francis (Frank) at age 35 and sister Annie at age 29, but he did not live longer than his parents. Horatio Alger, Sr. died in 1881 at the age of 75 and his wife, Olive Augusta [Fenno], died at age 71 in 1878. Alger's oldest sister, Olive Augusta, outlived all of them, dying in December 1916 at the age of 83.

Most Alger biographers gloss over his health issues, as little is known except that he was plagued by extreme myopia and asthma for most of his life. The former ailment — and his short stature — exempted him from military service in 1863. The cause of death listed on his death certificate was cardiovascular disease.

The earliest reference to Alger's health comes from his own hand, at the age of 20, when he noted in the biographical sketch he prepared for the Harvard Class Book of 1852 of his "delicate" health as a child.² This description was repeated some 70 years later when his Harvard biography was updated.³

Alger often complained of numerous ailments in

many of his letters, especially so after 1895. In one letter to a favorite recipient, Irving Blake, Alger wrote, on February 5, 1896, "I came to Natick because I considered myself in imminent danger of the grip [influenza]. I have staved it off but still have a bad cold." A few months later, on April 28, Alger writes to Blake again stating, "My general health is fair, but I find it difficult to rally from mental overwork. I wish I had your youthful energy" and "my brain is very sluggish at present."

In November of that year, Alger cuts short a trip to New York City writing, "I contracted so severe a cold that

I thought it the part of prudence to come back [to Natick] yesterday afternoon." On February 27, 1897, Alger writes to Blake again, complaining of "having a bad cold, but hope this letter will not find you 'enjoying the same blessing.'"

In other letters to various correspondents, Alger regularly complained of fatigue, bronchitis, rapid heart, shortness of breath, sore eyes and nervous prostration.⁴

The recipient of the three letters included in this article introduces the reader to Dr. Griffin, who may have been Alger's personal physician (see Example 1, at left). Regardless of the relationship between these two men, it apparently was a warm affiliation as noted in the January 16, 1890 letter (see Example 2, page 7). In this letter, Alger confirms an arrangement between the two whereby Alger would refer young men requiring medical attention to Griffin.

If any of Alger's young acquaintances were "mischievous," "foolish" or "imprudent," as noted in these letters, he would send them to Dr. Griffin for what almost certainly was treatment for sexually transmitted infections or, using the vernacular of the late 19th century, venereal disease (see Example 3, page 8). Although there are dozens of types of venereal diseases, the most common during this time period were gonorrhea and syphilis.

"Imprudent" was a euphemism used by Alger for sexual misadventures. He invoked it when confronted

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Example 1: Edwin Harrison Griffin, M.D. (1860-1951). Griffin was a well-known otolaryngologist in New York City and may have been Horatio Alger's personal physician.

Editor's notebook

As the 2022 convention gets closer and closer, host Jack Bales has put together his schedule of events, a copy of which is enclosed with this issue. Jack notes that a few items will be updated when we enclose the final version with the May-June **Newsboy**, which we hope to have in the mail around June 1.

Also in this issue is another copy of our official registration form for "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg" on June 23-26, 2022. Because the convention is three weeks later than last year, we have time for one more "preview" issue (May-June), with the annual post-convention issue pushed back to July-August. So *please*, don't put off getting your registrations into the mail. Jack has an exciting agenda all lined up!

As some of you may have heard, Brad Chase was in a serious automobile accident the first week of February, and is now recuperating at his home. According to his son Scott, Brad continues to exercise every day and recently has been able to leave the house for short walks with his wife, Ann. "Overall, he is doing very well," Scott Chase said.

In the crash on February 2, Brad was driving within a mile or so of home on his way to his doctor's office for a scheduled appointment when he was, according to Scott, "T-boned" on the driver's side at an intersection. He suffered a broken rib, a collapsed lung (which did not require surgery) and a severely bruised pelvis and other bruises.

"He looked both ways before crossing the intersection, but still doesn't remember anything about the accident itself," Scott said. "After leaving the hospital he had a short stay at an assisted living center, before his doctors and other health professionals determined he could do his rehabilitation at home through a home healthcare service agency. He has been having both physical therapy and occupational therapy, which ended about a week and a half ago."

Brad welcomes phone calls, emails, or even a card or note by regular mail. His phone number is (860) 749-3828, email address bschase@aol.com and the home address is Bradford S. Chase, 10 Knollwood Circle, Enfield, CT 06082. "He's at his laptop every day looking at eBay and his emails," Scott said. "He continues to have visits from his friends and members of his church, and he also looks forward to hearing from his many Alger Society friends," Scott said.

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

to do something? Or were you unable to do something? You will find the answer in the mirror to this question, and to another question — who are you?" Tough truths from a man who famously doesn't mince words.

I can recall my father telling me stories about the rubber and fuel rationing, scrap metal drives and war bond rallies which took place on the home front during WW2. Many of our lives were upended, but we were spared the horrors that families living in Britain and Europe were facing at the time. Today, we are again spared the terror of bombing raids or tank invasions, and the only pain we're asked to endure is that to be found at the fuel pump or in the stock market. One would but hope that we're a country still willing to rise to such meager challenges.

This year's convention is fast approaching. Starting on June 23, 2022, it's later than usual, and this will be the next-to-last issue of **Newsboy** before the event and one of our final opportunities to encourage you to attend.

You will find further convention information in both this and the upcoming May-June issues, including our registration form and schedule of events. Our host, Jack Bales, who regaled us last time with a memorable slide show of the Society's earlier days, held a superb pre-convention gathering at his house, as well as a full schedule that he pulled off like a seasoned professional, and he's back this year as organizer, host and master of ceremonies. We are all grateful for his efforts and look forward to another splendid affair.

It's not too late to make donations or consignments to this year's convention auction. We need contributions this year more than ever to bring in much-needed revenue and make the convention the financial success we know it can be, and needs to be, for the continued financial health of our organization. Another good reason to attend is the upcoming election of officers, which is voted upon by the general membership at the annual meeting. Several vacancies will need filling and the candidates will be announced at that time.

Finally, I'd like to say it has been personally an honor for me to serve the Society as its President this past year, and I'd like to close by wishing this year's new incoming officers the best of luck for the future.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
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2022 convention preview

A tour of Virginia's leading historic sites — Part 2

Three American icons: Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown

By Jack Bales (PF-258)

According to the website www.visitfred.com, "Each building in Fredericksburg's 40-block historic district holds a unique story. Whether you're learning about them from a horse-drawn carriage, a trolley or a walking tour, you'll enjoy all that Fredericksburg has to offer."

I've covered much of what Fredericksburg indeed has to offer in past pre-convention issues of *Newsboy*. Nearby cities and towns also attract visitors, and at the top of many tourists' lists are Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, located along the scenic 23-mile Colonial Parkway in southeastern Virginia.

If you want to see in advance what awaits you in this area, explore www.visitwilliamsburg.com, which features arts, attractions, activities, events, shopping, restaurants, and of course, history. You might say that America's history all began in this area. What events transpired when the English colonists arrived in Jamestown in 1607? Find out at the Jamestown Settlement's Museum, where you can discover the world of 17th-century Virginia through films, gallery exhibits, and outdoor living history. In nearby Yorktown you can discover what led to America's independence as you explore the site of the Revolutionary War's last major battle.

Williamsburg, the colonial capital of Virginia, is billed as "the largest outdoor educational living museum in the country." Its "Historic Area" boasts 301 acres of historic sites, art museums, working shops, music festivals, and scores of people "who bring history to life at programs and events throughout the day" (www.colonialwilliamsburg.org).

I could go on and on here, but let's focus on something besides history, for there is still plenty to see and do. Activities include bowling and miniature golf; breweries and wineries and distilleries, spas, theaters and, of course, tours. A friend of mine loves shopping and once enthusiastically told me that people from all over the east coast head to the Williamsburg area to look for bargains at the countless stores. You can spend your money at outlets and shopping centers, antique stores, shops offering gourmet foods and wine, as well as in consignment, historic, and specialty shops.

When you are tired from carrying all those packages, how about unwinding and enjoying the beauty of nature? "From biking, fishing, hiking, trail riding, and everything in-between, let the area show off its true beauty for

any activity, anytime of year" (www.visitwilliamsburg.com). And in terms of "true beauty," here's something that caught my eye.

You can catch your breath at Sweethaven Lavender in Williamsburg, a family-owned farm, and stroll among the flower fields and cut your own flower bouquets. You can also shop for breads, fresh meat and seafood, handmade soaps and candles, honey, seasonal produce, and skin-care products. The owners also offer locally churned lavender ice cream, lavender lemonade, and sweet tea.

Why lavender? According to the farm's website, www.sweethavenlavender.com, lavender is "gorgeous in its simplicity and the scent of it on the breeze is exhilarating. Lavender essential oil is known as the 'Swiss Army' (Continued on Page 6)



Visitors to historic Colonial Williamsburg will have an opportunity to tour the city in a horse-drawn carriage.

Wikimedia Commons

Convention preview

(Continued from Page 5)

Knife' of oils for its healing, calming, and antibacterial properties."

Yorktown and Jamestown also offer much for those who are "historied out." Yorktown has many charming shops that offer unique gifts, and you can check out the fine restaurants at Historic Yorktown's Riverwalk Landing.

And speaking of water, you can stroll along the York River's beach, fishing pier, and public docks, and take in the vessels and tall ships. "Relive bygone days aboard the traditional schooners Alliance and Serenity as you glide down the York River. Take a guided Segway tour through the lively town offered by Patriot Tours and Provisions. Shop for fine art and antiques on Main Street's galleries and shops" (www.visitwilliamsburg.com).

Jamestown marks the first successful, permanent English settlement in the United States. At "Historic Jamestowne," you can view archeological discoveries at the original fort and learn about glassblowing, one of America's first attempts at industrialization and manufacturing, at the famous Glasshouse. There are plenty of artifacts and exhibits at Jamestown Settlement, and you can also "discover the Powhatan Indian way of life in a re-created village, try on English armor in a re-created fort, and climb aboard replicas of the three ships that brought the colonists to Virginia in 1607."

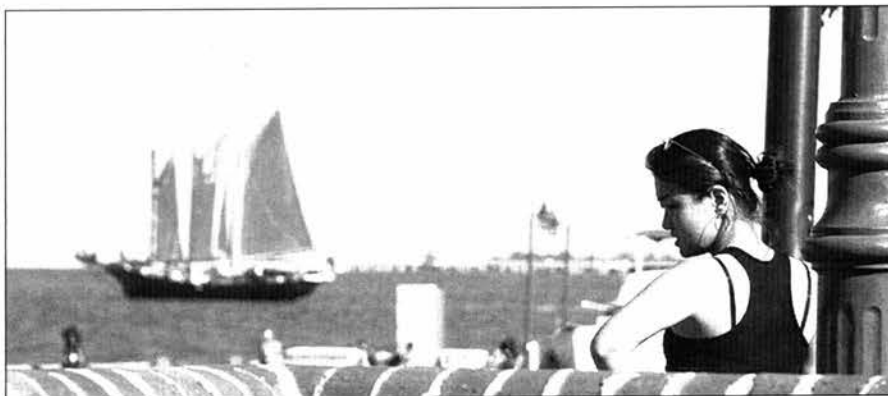


Reconstructed houses at Jamestown, Virginia, which in 1607 became the first permanent English settlement in North America. Wikimedia Commons

Years ago, I spent a day in the Williamsburg-Yorktown-Jamestown area, and I especially enjoyed the living-history experience of walking around this village. (You can also view a scale model of it in the exhibition galleries.) The village is called Paspahugh town, and it was recreated by studying both the descriptions recorded by 17th-century English colonists and the archeological work done at a site along the James River.

This area was once inhabited by Paspahugh Indians, a Powhatan tribal group that lived near Jamestown. The village includes reed-covered houses, cooking areas, crops, and a ceremonial circle of carved wooden posts. And what's living history without costumed historical interpreters? You will enjoy watching — and talking to — the animated men and women as they "discuss and demonstrate how the Powhatan culture grew and prepared food, processed animal hides, made tools and pottery, and wove natural fibers into cordage" (www.jyfmuseums.org/jamestown-settlement/powhatan-village/).

I hope those attending "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg" can take advantage of at least a few of the various attractions in the Fredericksburg area. 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 Yorktown tourist enjoys the open air while a tall ship sails the York River. Yorktown was the site of the climactic battle of the Revolutionary War.

Wikimedia Commons

36 West 33rd St.

Jan 16/90.

My dear doctor Griffin,

Your note has just reached me - I appreciate your kind offer, but hope I can keep my young friends out of mischief - If they are foolish I will gladly send them to you -

Have you an evening

as formerly, when you are at home to your friends? If so I will call very soon, shall not forget my former pleasant visits -

I shall send you a couple of books in a day or two, though I doubt if my young Griffins are yet old enough to appreciate them -

With regards to your wife and sister, I am
Yours sincerely,
Horatio Alger Jr.

Example 2: My dear doctor Griffin: Your note has just reached me. I appreciate your kind offer, but hope I can keep my young friends out of mischief. If they are foolish I will gladly send them to you. Have you an evening as formerly, when you are at home to your friends? If so I will call very soon. I have not forgotten my former pleasant visits. I shall send you a couple of books in a day or two, though I doubt if my young Griffins are yet old enough to appreciate them. With regards to your wife and sister, I am Yours Sincerely, Horatio Alger, Jr.

Letters from Horatio — Part 4; or, Alger calls the doctor

(Continued from Page 3)

with a molestation charge by the parish committee at the Brewster Unitarian Church and Society in 1866, where he was the minister, and used it later when communicating with Dr. Griffin and others.⁵

The standard treatment for venereal disease during the 1890s was prescribing mercury, arsenic, silver nitrate or other metallic elements. These drugs could be ingested, applied topically on any sores or rashes or injected directly into the urethra. The theory then was to induce excessive salivation or sweating to “expel” the disease and any impurities from the body. The

treatments were barbaric and in some cases the toxic effects of ingesting mercury or arsenic outweighed any medical benefits. Many patients succumbed from mercury poisoning.

Heat therapy was also widely prescribed during this period as the syphilis bacterium is sensitive to temperature. The patient would be enclosed in a “fever cabinet” (except the head) and be subjected to temperatures in excess of 100 degrees for four to six hours at a time. The sessions would be scheduled every third day up to six times. Again, the idea was to force the infection from the

(Continued on Page 8)

Letters from Horatio — Part 4; or, Alger calls the doctor

(Continued from Page 7)

body by means of excessive sweating.

Unfortunately, the early symptoms of syphilis would often disappear — leaving patients believing they were cured — and the late symptoms, frequently fatal, might not appear until years (or decades) later.

But, as noted in the October 1895 letter to Griffin, Alger writes that Edward Downie “has improved so much under your charge” so, in some cases, the treatment was salubrious (see Example 4, page 9). Edward was the younger brother of John Downie, an orphaned newsboy that Alger befriended on the streets of New York City.⁶ He supported both boys for a time, paid for John to attend Brooklyn Business College and used both as characters in several novels.⁷

That Alger would take on this role is not surprising. Boys constantly sought his attention — occasionally to the point of pestering him — seeking an audience for job opportunities, letters of recommendation, assorted business schemes, money or other favors. In one letter to “Friend Eugene,” dated June 3, 1891, Alger writes, “I make it a point not to urge any enterprises upon my friends. If at any time you go to Montana I can give you a simple letter of introduction to Albert J. Seligman, whom I know very well. This will give you the opportunity of laying the matter before him.”

In another letter to Blake, dated March 1896, Alger writes, “I gave up my room on 34th St. because I had too many young callers who were unwelcome. For this reason please don’t mention where I am.”⁸ This is probably the primary reason Alger took rooms in nine different boarding houses between

1875 and 1896, after which he removed to Natick permanently.⁹

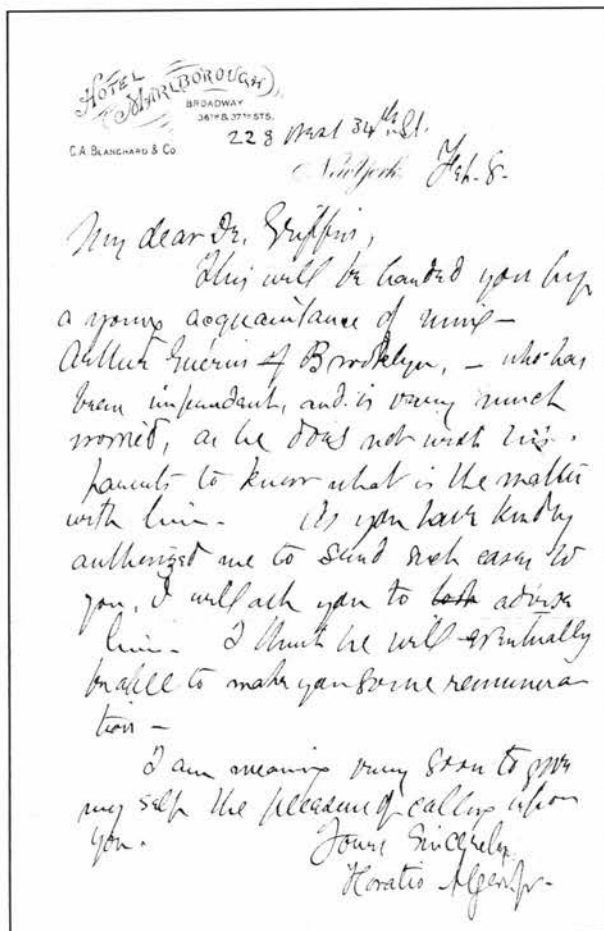
Lacking a first name or address, the identity of “Dr. Griffin” is not certain, although the probable candidate is most likely Edwin Harrison Griffin. The voluminous *Physicians and Surgeons of America* for 1896 lists only one

Dr. Griffin in the entire country, residing and practicing in New York City.¹⁰

Born on June 27, 1860, Griffin grew up in New York City attending the College of the City of New York and graduating from the Bellevue Hospital Medical College in 1882. He started his private practice the same year, his specialty being diseases of the nose and throat. He was also the inventor of several surgical instruments including Griffin’s Nasal Snare, Griffin’s Anatomical Spatula, Griffin’s Palato Pharyngeal Dilator and others.¹¹ Griffin was a member of the Medical Society of the County of New York, the New York Physicians’ Mutual Aid Association and the Academy of Medicine.¹²

Griffin lectured at Bellevue Hospital and was the attending surgeon there in the Nose and Throat Department. As Clinical Professor of Otolaryngology, he wrote many articles regarding nose and throat diseases including *The Treatment for the Radical Cure of Polypi of the Nose* in 1890, *The Local Treatment for Syphilitic Manifestations of the Throat* in 1891 and *Chancre of the Mouth* in 1892.¹³

As venereal diseases symptoms often manifest as lesions or sores in the mucous membranes or mouth, Griffin would have been a logical choice for medical care if one were so afflicted. He also may have been treating Alger for his chronic bronchitis and other health problems.



Example 3: *My dear Dr. Griffin: This will be handed you by a young acquaintance of mine — Arthur Guérin of Brooklyn, — who has been imprudent, and is very much worried, as he does not wish his parents to know what is the matter with him. As you have kindly authorized me to send such cases to you, I will ask you to advise him. I trust he will eventually be able to make you some remuneration. I am meaning very soon to give my self the pleasure of calling upon you.*

227 West 34th St. New York
Oct 10, 1895-

Dear Dr. Griffin,

I have just returned to the city after a four months' absence. I am glad to hear from Edward Downie that he has improved so much under your charge. I will very soon send you a check with my thanks added.

I shall soon call, and will bring Mrs. Griffin a copy of "The Disagreeable Woman."

Yours sincerely,
Mortimer Alger, Jr.

Example 4: Dear Dr. Griffin: I have just returned to the city after a four months' absence. I am glad to hear from Edward Downie that he has improved so much under your charge. I will very soon send you a check with my thanks added. I shall soon call, and will bring Mrs. Griffin a copy of "The Disagreeable Woman."

In the second article mentioned above, Griffin describes the treatment for one patient complaining of a sore throat and after examining was diagnosed with "extensive ulceration of the pharynx" caused by syphilis. He prescribed a treatment of "large doses of potassium iodide" and the "local use of the lotio nigra as a gargle five times a day." Lotio nigra, or "black lotion," was a solution of mercury chloride, water and lime extract. Griffin reported that after two weeks the patient's "throat was completely healed."¹⁴

Griffin hailed from a family of medical professionals. His father, Thomas B. Griffin (1810-1871), was a doctor as was his half-brother, Bradney Griffin (1843-1872). Two of his sons became doctors, as did at least one grandson.

Griffin married Caroline Wilson Bardash (some sources cite Bardasch) on June 24, 1885, and had four

sons. Edwin Albert was born in 1887, Walter Wilson was born in 1888, Egbert Bradney was born in 1893 and Eugene in 1902. A fifth child, Felicite Antoinette, born in 1886, apparently died in childhood as she was not listed in Griffin's short biography published in 1896.

In Alger's letter from January 1890, he offers to send a "couple of books in a day or two, though I doubt if my young Griffins are yet old enough to appreciate them." As Edwin was three years old in 1890, and his brother, Walter, was two years old, this would support Alger's statement that they were too young and further substantiate the identity of Griffin.

The 1900 U. S. Census places the Griffin family residence at 112 W. 45th Street in Manhattan. The household included Griffin, his wife, Caroline, and three sons; the 1905 New York State Census added son Eugene, with the

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Letters from Horatio — Part 4; *or, Alger calls the doctor*

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family still residing at the same address. Also included in the household were three servants: a butler, cook and nurse.¹⁵ Alger moved frequently between boarding houses while living in the city (relocating every two years on average) and at one time lived at 107 W. 44th Street, just steps from the Griffin residence.

The 1910 U. S. Census indicates that the Griffin family had moved a few blocks away and was residing at 55 W. 47th Street, with the household still including three servants.¹⁶

Both Edwin Albert and Walter Wilson earned medical degrees at New York University, with the former following in his father's footsteps and becoming a prominent otolaryngologist. He was also a past president of the Pan American Medical Association, past vice president of the King's County Medical Society and member of the Associated Physicians of Long Island. Edwin died in 1957 at the age of 70 in Brooklyn, New York.¹⁷ Walter died in 1970 at the age of 81 in Middlebury, Vermont.

The circumstances of how these young men contracted venereal diseases is, of course, unknown, but it is interesting to note that in some cases the boys were expected to pay Dr. Griffin and in other cases Alger offered to pay.

Next: Letters from Horatio — Part 5; or, Alger writes to his godson.

* * *

Acknowledgements: the author wishes to thank Carol Nackenoff (PF-921) and Bob Huber (PF-841) for their input and review. A special thanks to Jack Bales (PF-258) for his usual literary sleuthing.

NOTES

1. Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales. *Horatio Alger, Jr., An Annotated Bibliography of Comment and Criticism*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. (1981), p. 3.
2. Scharnhorst and Bales, p. 4.
3. Grace Williamson Edes. *Annals of the Harvard Class of 1852*. Cambridge, MA: privately printed (1922), p. 5.
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5. Gary Scharnhorst, with Jack Bales. *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press (1985), p. 66.
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13. Watson, p. 225.
14. E. Harrison Griffin. *The Local Treatment for Syphilitic Manifestations of the Throat*. New York: Press of Leon P. Kuhl (1892), p. 15.
15. 1900 U. S. Census, New York City, Enumeration District 731, sheet no. 6, lines 34-41.
16. 1910 U. S. Census, New York City, Enumeration District 1111, sheet no. 6A, lines 6-14.
17. "Edwin A. Griffin, Surgeon, Was 70," *The New York Times*, December 30, 1957, p. 21.

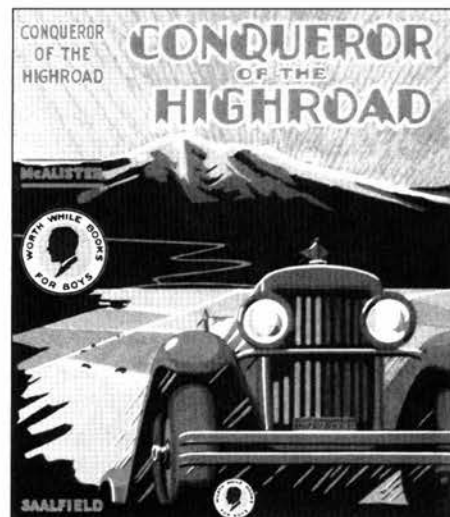
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill,

I enjoyed Mr. Booth's article on the "Worth While Books for Boys" and their subsequent reprints. I tackled this series myself about 10 years ago, after buying a copy of *Conqueror of the Highroad* at a local sale. Nice jacket, I thought, and I also enjoyed the story. After picking up a few more, I realized that there were a number of formats involved and so went to the CBI to confirm the issue dates. Although the first six all carry 1930 copyright dates, none of the books show up the CBI until 1931. All eight are listed there, but there is no reference to any pen name.

Somehow, I did determine that the sisters Alison Lide and Margaret Johansen were the actual authors, although when one checks their names in the 1930 through 1934 issues of the CBI, there are no listings for the Worth While Books under their names, although other titles not part of

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 10)

the series are mentioned. The name of James Braden never appears connected to this series either. At this time, I had no idea that the Saalfield catalogues were available online. The "Worth While Books for Boys" series did not appear in the first or second edition of the Mattson & Davis Guide, so I prepared a listing for that series and then attempted to update what did appear there.

I gathered more copies of the books, noting the differences in their quality and construction, especially that of the use of quite acidic paper in all but what I had determined was format 1. (Check your copy of this update. Page 9 for the first format; page 15 for what I had determined were numbers 2 and 3.) I was puzzled by a 1936 inscription date in one copy of a format 1 book. I had never seen something this late in a Saalfield edition with high-quality paper before.

My first thought was that I had found a book that had been in storage in a bookstore for several years before someone bought it, as there was basically no wear to indicate it had been purchased as a used book and then given as a gift. But after reading Mr. Booth's article, which states that the catalogues indicated that the format 1 books were not replaced until 1936, it occurred to me that quite possibly Saalfield had been overly enthusiastic when reissuing the first six volumes, along with titles seven and eight in the series in 1931, thus unintentionally creating a backlog of stock that they continued to offer.

If the catalogues are taken literally, and one assumes that each year the company reprinted the books in their original format, *they had to be the only books they were issuing in this high-quality paper*. Not a very likely scenario, as books from 1933 on were printed on poor quality paper as a response to the Depression, and it is very doubtful that Saalfield was retaining a stash of this good paper just for this series. I think they began to run out of the 1931 books in 1935, and so began to reissue them, although I would never have guessed that the second format would be the worst quality books produced for this series.

When I wrote up the three series for the MAD update, I used the time-tested sequence that collectors see in a high percentage of the series that remain in print for 10 years or more. That, of course, is that the earliest printings are the highest in quality, and if that quality suffers over the years, it is because of the progressively cheaper materials used in their production.

Here is where I was wrong, though. So many cop-

ies of the first format were still in publisher's hands that there was no reprinting of this series (the World Wide Books for Boys editions) until stocks had been reduced enough to warrant it. Remember again, this is the Depression and no publishers are over-producing for any reason; they are concerned with selling what they have and, in Saalfield's case, adding cheaply made copies of recent acquisitions from Altemus and Burt to their lines. By the time they decided to reissue the series, they reduced the quality to the lowest it would ever be, and thanks to Mr. Booth's research here we now have the correct sequence. I must admit I never bought a copy of the white-spined reprints, thinking, of course, that this must be the final appearance of the series. I was not interested in this format, after having collected a set of the first-format books and examples of the "Mystery and Adventure Series" and "The Air Adventure Series."

One other thing I might mention: when reading these books, with the exception of the farm story, I was distinctly reminded of many of William Heyliger's stories of boys who made good. Possibly this struck me more than the similarities to Horatio Alger, who was writing in a different era and in much different style. Being a Heyliger fan after reading the "Jerry Hicks" books as a kid in the late '50s, I have retained an interest in his books to this day, and, while I own them all, I have saved a few unread so I can still enjoy a new title now and then.

I noticed your comment on the "grip of winter" and so must mention that winter skipped us this year. We have a few days here and there with temperatures below average, but many more days with temperatures well over average, including several days in the 70s in February. Cloudy days are noticeably absent, so if you want to escape the snow (we have yet to see enough snow this year to warrant a plow) our governor (brother of the man who wrecked the Cubs) is looking for immigrants, so long as you are not from another country. Personally, I wish I lived in Wisconsin these days, where at least the seasons are still present. I'm really not a fan of endless summer. Hope all is well with you!

Yours,
Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879)
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Omaha, NE 68106
lewarcher@aol.com

P.S.: I don't know if Brad Chase mentioned to you that I was working on something to do with the New York Book Company and the **Wonder Island Boys Series** (1914-15), but I ran up against a brick wall and don't see any way around it. Perhaps you may know something of the current whereabouts of the NYBC records?



"GO BACK TO THE RANCH."

The Rambler Club's Aeroplane, Page 168



A CHORUS OF GOOD-BYES.

The Rambler Club's Motor Car, frontispiece



"I KNOW YOUR GAME."

The Rambler Club's Ball Nine, Page 198



ITS JAWS OPENED WIDE.

The Rambler Club in Panama, Page 270

With words and pictures

William Crispin Sheppard and the Rambler Club Series

By William R. Gowen (PF-706)

One of the more fascinating aspects of our hobby is learning about authors and books that have something unusual to offer when compared with the typical juvenile series. One such discovery is the career of William Henry Crispin Sheppard, who in his books used the more streamlined "W. Crispin Sheppard." Born on New Year's Day in 1871, Sheppard was a Philadelphia native whose confirmed 20 titles spanned the years 1909-1919.

Like many authors of the time, Sheppard chose to have his work produced by a publishing house close to home, the Penn Publishing Company of Philadelphia.



W. H. C. SHEPPARD.

Penn is known to Horatio Alger collectors as the publisher of seven first editions starting with *The Odds Against Him* in 1890 and concluding with *The Young Musician* in 1906.

In addition to Alger, Penn was a prominent publisher of juvenile books, with about two dozen series for boys and several additional

series for girls, one of the most prominent of the latter the **Betty Wales Series** by Edith K. Dunton under her pseudonym "Margaret Warde."

Sheppard's **Rambler Club Series** wins the golden palm for being the longest in number of titles (15) in boys' series published by Penn, the runner-up being the highly regarded **Patriot Lad Series**, 12 titles from 1923-1936 by Russell Gordon Carter set during the Revolutionary War. Most of the Penn series consisted of four to six titles, with the **West Point Series** by Paul G. Malone (a West Point graduate who achieved the rank of general) a successful seller for Penn with eight titles published between 1904 and 1911.

However, the **Rambler Club Series** had another major distinction other than its length. It is one of the few juvenile series in which both the text and illustrations were by the same person. Each of the 15 books states on



THE RAMBLER CLUB IN PANAMA W. CRISPIN SHEPPARD

Dust jacket for the last title in the **Rambler Club Series**.

the title page "Illustrated by the Author." This output covers 75 original images — a frontispiece and four internal plates — reproduced in black-and-white on glossy paper. Four examples are shown on Page 12.

These illustrations can stand up against the best found in early 20th-century series books. For a typical comparison, look at the excellent illustrations in Byron A. Dunn's three Civil War series as shown in the **Newsboy** issues of March-April and May-June 2020 with the two-part article "A Son of Michigan," in particular the artwork of H. S. DeLay and J. Allen St. John. There are many more examples.

Other boys' series illustrated by the author include A. Hyatt Verrill's **Boy Adventurers Series** (Putnam,

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William Crispin Sheppard and the Rambler Club Series

(Continued from Page 15)

1922-1924) and **Deep Sea Hunters Series** (D. Appleton, 1922-1924); W. Gordon Parker's **Deer Lodge Series** (Lee & Shepard, 1898-1900); Milton Caniff's **Steve Canyon Series** (G&D, 1955); and Chauncey Hawkins' **Ned Brewster Series** (Little, Brown, 1912-1914).

A few clarifications are needed. Verrill also illustrated (using both his own drawings and photographs) most of his non-fiction natural history books (flora & fauna, indigenous peoples from the many countries and islands he visited, along with sea shells and other natural artifacts). However, Verrill drew traditional illustrations for the two series mentioned here: a frontispiece for the **Deep Sea Hunters Series** and a mix of paintings and photographs for the **Boy Adventurers Series**. In the case of the **Steve Canyon** books, their illustrations were adaptations by G&D house artists from Caniff's original comic strips.

Another interesting point: W. Crispin Sheppard was more known to the public as an artist than author, at least in the background material for this article uncovered by James D. Keeline (PF-898) from the Internet, including archival newspaper articles, census records and other sources. The census records during his adult years usually list his occupation as "artist" and his places of employment as newspapers. However, the 1910 census appropriately updates his occupation to "artist and author." Sheppard's obituaries credit his employers as the **Philadelphia Public Ledger** between 1918 and 1924, and the **Philadelphia Evening Bulletin** from 1924 until his retirement in 1940.

We should emphasize that Sheppard's work as a series book artist was limited to the **Rambler Club Series** books, not his four-volume, World War I-based **Don Hale Series** (Penn, 1917-1919) or the "single" Penn title, *A Knight of the West Side*, published in 1909 (see chart on Page 15 for names of artists).

As mentioned earlier, Sheppard was born in Philadelphia on Jan. 1, 1871; his parents were Edwin Sheppard and Lydia H. Crispin. At the time, his father was 35 and his mother 41. He had a sister and brother, with the sister, Mary Florence, passing away at age 10 in 1873, when William was just 2 years old. His father died in 1904 at age 68 and his mother in 1910 at age 80. All official records show William Crispin Sheppard as having never married.

The young Sheppard obviously became interested in art as a youth, but nothing otherwise is known about

his upbringing, including early schooling (public or private), with the 1880 U.S. Census listing his occupation as "School." He entered the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts in the early 1890s.

His work began to attract public attention, and in the May 25, 1895 edition of **The Philadelphia Inquirer**, the annual prize announcements by the Academy of Fine Arts included the following:

THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

W. H. C. Sheppard will go abroad for a year as a reward for his excellent progress — some of the most notable exhibits.

THE COVETED SCHOLARSHIP

The traveling scholarship prize of \$800, which is established by a member of the board for the purpose of enabling a student of the Academy to study abroad, and for which this year there was a severe competition, was



The sketch that earned the 24-year-old W. C. Sheppard his scholarship to study in Paris in 1895-96.

won by W.H.C. Sheppard. This scholarship is not awarded for any specific work, but to that student whose average in all lines is the highest in all three concours of the year.

A sample head study by Mr. Sheppard is found in the group accompanying. The expression of the face here found — one of haughty spirit, is hard to catch with the brush, and Mr.

Sheppard has met good success. The delicate throat, the fluffy black hair, the feather-crowned hat, the soft tint of the blue dress, are all well executed, and the whole creation leaves a feeling of satisfaction with the spectator.

During the following weeks, Sheppard completed his official United States passport application in preparation for his trip by steamship to Europe, and starting in Paris later in the year began studies at the Academie Julian under Gustave Bouguereau, and at the Ecole Des Beaux Arts with Jean-Leon Gerome, before returning home to launch his professional career as an artist (and later, as an artist/author).

Over the years, Sheppard's artwork was featured in exhibitions at his alma mater, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; the Paris Salon in 1899; the Salons of America (1934); American Artists Professional League (1939-40);

the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire (1946-51), and the Terry Art Institute (1951).

The Rambler Club Series

William Crispin Sheppard's **Rambler Club Series** made its debut in 1909 with *The Rambler Club Afloat*, the first of the author's thrilling tales of a close group of five teenagers from the upper Midwest town of Kingswood, Wisconsin. The boys of their newly formed club are introduced one by one, in a cleverly constructed opening chapter, with the first character adhering to one of juvenile fiction's old clichés — he's got a weight problem — described as "a stout boy of pleasing appearance."

His name is Dave Brandon, and in the introductory scene he is lolling in the grass "...in the shade of a group of willows which fringed the bank of a small brook. ... It was one of those early summer days when nature is all aglow and the sweet scent of the woods and fields is in the air. On this particular day, the sky was flecked with a few white clouds, which remained almost motionless in this great expanse of blue. A faint line of hills, hazy in the distance, lay to the east, and the undulating country between was dotted by occasional farmhouses."

Soon another boy appears. Of course, he shows "a striking difference in appearance ... lithe and his every movement denoted an active temperament." The newcomer's name is Sam Randall. Soon the names of the other chums are introduced: Bob Somers, who is intent on forming a club devoted to hunting and fishing, along with two others — Dick Travers and Tom Clifton. The latter three will soon be formally introduced to Sheppard's readers in the following pages.

Dave and Sam turn their conversation over to what to name the proposed new club, but they stumble upon an answer, even though Dave remains content to shoo off a buzzing honeybee that is spoiling his afternoon nap:

The stout boy sighed, yawned twice, and then with exasperating slowness, arose to his feet. "Listen to that brook," he said. "What better music could you want than that? I certainly do like to just ramble around."

"That's it! Hurrah! Hurrah!" cried Sam.

"That's what?" demanded Dave, staring at his companion in surprise.

"Hurrah! To ramble around — that's good — we'll call it the Rambler Club!" and Sam gave vent to his enthusiasm by another shout. (15)

Of course, this would not be a true series book without the trials and tribulations that would befall our heroes, much of it brought on by the existence of a rival organization named the Nimrod Club. Plenty of excitement occurs throughout the remainder of the 358 pages, including the damage of their boat, the *Rambler*,

Books by W. Crispin Sheppard

The Rambler Club Series

Title	Publisher, Year
The Rambler Club Afloat.....	Penn, 1909
The Rambler Club's Winter Camp.....	Penn, 1910
The Rambler Club in the Mountains.....	Penn, 1910
The Rambler Club on Circle T Ranch.....	Penn, 1911
The Rambler Club among the Lumberjacks.....	Penn, 1911
The Rambler Club's Gold Mine.....	Penn, 1912
The Rambler Club's Aeroplane.....	Penn, 1912
The Rambler Club's Houseboat.....	Penn, 1912
The Rambler Club's Motor Car.....	Penn, 1913
The Rambler Club's Ball Nine.....	Penn, 1913
The Rambler Club with the Northwest Mounted.....	Penn, 1914
The Rambler Club's Football Team.....	Penn, 1914
The Rambler Club's Motor Yacht.....	Penn, 1915
The Rambler Club on the Texas Border.....	Penn, 1915
The Rambler Club in Panama.....	Penn, 1916

All titles illustrated by the author

The Don Hale Series

Title	Publisher, Year
Don Hale in the War Zone.....	Penn, 1917
Don Hale Over There.....	Penn, 1918
Don Hale with the Flying Squadron.....	Penn, 1919
Don Hale with the Yanks.....	Penn, 1919

All titles illustrated by Hugh A. Bodine

Non-series title

A Knight of the West Side.....	Penn, 1909
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Illustrated by S. Shreve

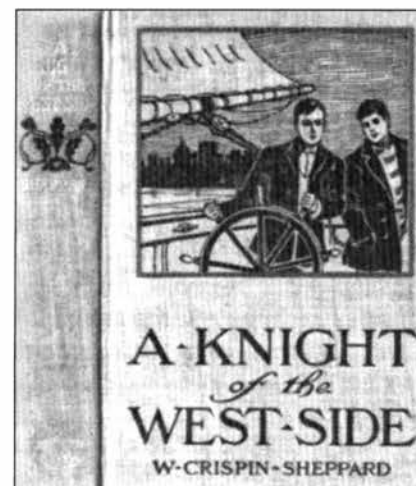
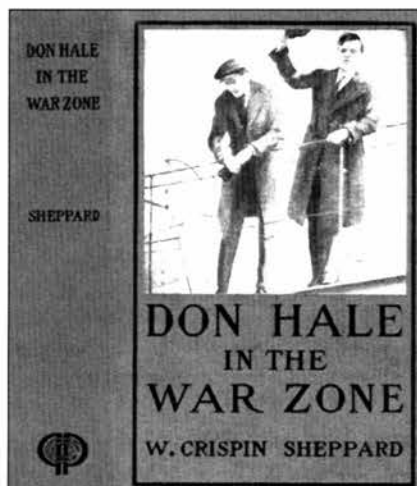
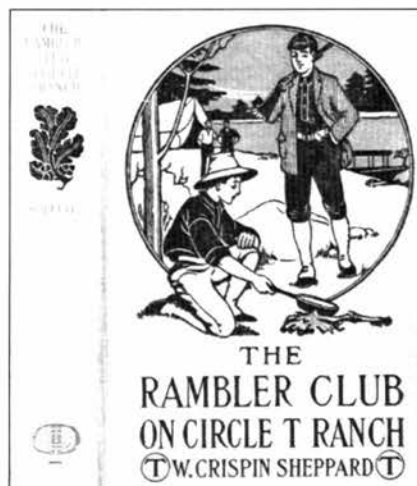
by collision by their rivals' boat (and subsequent repairs); the *Rambler* later sunk by fire and explosion; a nasty storm; a shooting, before the Ramblers emerge triumphant over their rivals. From the list of titles on this page, their wide variety of adventures, many of them taking them far from the Wisconsin home, are evident. The books average well over 300 pages.

Unlike many series of the World War I era, the five heroes of the Rambler Club do not serve overseas. That "privilege" is granted to the title character of Sheppard's four-volume **Don Hale Series** (Penn, 1916-1919).

Sheppard's Rambler Club title introductions offer a glance at what is to follow, without any plot "spoilers." This excerpt is found in *The Rambler Club's Motor Yacht*:

At the time Bob Somers, Dave Brandon, Tom Clifton, Dick Travers and Sam Randall, of Kingswood, Wisconsin, founded the Rambler Club, it is quite certain that not one of the boys had the slightest idea of the adventures and

(Continued on Page 16)



In addition to his 15-volume **Rambler Club Series**, W. Crispin Sheppard wrote the 4-volume World War I-based **Don Hale Series** and the early juvenile adventure *A Knight of the West Side*.

William Crispin Sheppard and the Rambler Club Series

(Continued from Page 15)

strange incidents which were to be crowded into their lives as a result.

In several states, the Rambler Club has tasted the delights of camp life; and their experiences on the plains, in the mountains or deep in the forest, have added to their self-reliance and strengthened their frames, besides teaching them the valuable lesson of accepting hardship and discomfort in a philosophical spirit. (3)

Little is known of Sheppard's retirement years. He died on July 22, 1953 at 1:10 p.m. while a patient at Philadelphia General Hospital. The cause of death was listed as "hypertensive cardiovascular accident."

* * *

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank James D. Keeline (PF-898) for his diligent Internet research, including newspaper articles, Sheppard family U.S. Census data and other sources cited below.

Robert E. Kasper (PF-327) kindly provided the above cover image for the rare early Sheppard title *A Knight of the West Side*.

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