



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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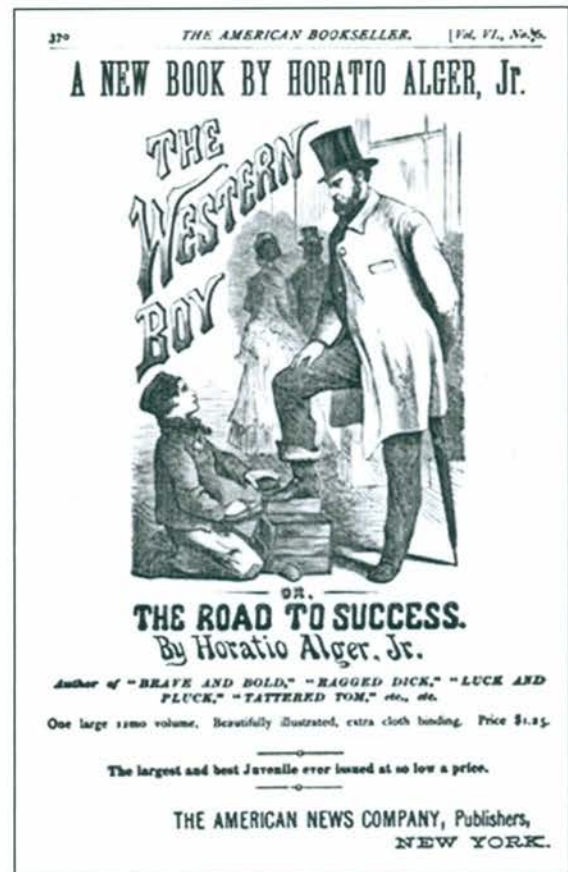
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'22 Convention: final countdown

Fredericksburg ready to welcome the H.A.S.

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President's column

It's shaping up to be a hot summer ... one of many more to come, if global warming is to be believed. Here in south Florida, the summer heat has hit us like a freight train. Fortunately, we have our balmy ocean breezes to temper it.

As Americans eagerly hit the road this summer for vacation travel, places like Fredericksburg promise to be hot and hopping with tourists.

If you haven't yet booked your stay for our convention on June 23-26, I urge you not to delay any longer. Ditto for plane or rental car reservations. Those who visited last year will find plenty of new diversions in this colonial and Civil War town. Destinations of interest that were closed last summer are now open and welcoming visitors.

Our host, Jack Bales, provides further particulars in this issue, as well as the latest updates, including an extension of our hotel reservation deadline to June 13.

I read with fascination our esteemed editor's article about William Crispin Sheppard, who both authored and illustrated his Rambler Club book series. He listed other notable author-illustrators of series books, but I've recently become acquainted with one not included in the article, which I believe merits mentioning.

The Augustus Series, named for the eponymous lad whose adventures are chronicled across 12 volumes, was written and illustrated by Le Grand Henderson, who published under the *nom de plume* "Le Grand."

A graduate of the Yale School of Fine Arts, he was perhaps best known for his first book *Why is a Yak* (1937), and other early readers, such as *The Puppy Who Chased the Sun* (1950), *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Fish* (1951), and *Are Dogs Better Than Cats?* (1953), which were published in the Wonder Books line. One particular title of his, *When the Mississippi was Wild* (1952), is now quite popular with home-schoolers.

While much of his work was devoted to the early grades of reading, the Augustus Series was directed toward slightly older kids of roughly 8 to 12 years.

The series starts with *Augustus and the River* (1939), an uproarious tale in the vein of Twain's *Huck Finn*. It's a parade of shenanigans and high jinks on a shanty boat down the Mississippi, with a cavalcade of strange characters, salty humor and local color. The author based the story and drawings on his own leisurely eight-month trip on a shanty from Minneapolis to New Orleans. All

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HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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

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

The Western Boy

First-edition mystery solved

By Scott B. Chase (PF-1106)

I have enjoyed solving mysteries for many years, and when I read the confusing descriptions in Ralph Gardner's¹ and Bob Bennett's² Alger bibliographies about who the first-edition publisher is for *The Western Boy*, I saw this as another mystery to be solved.

Before getting into the mystery, I want to express my gratitude to the many people who did the hard "in the trenches" research upon which I have built. It is their fundamental legwork, the publication of it, and the availability of online resources that make my work even possible. Many thanks to all.

Now back to the mystery. Both the Gardner and Bennett bibliographies indicate that the publisher of *The Western Boy* is G.W. Carleton & Co. in 1878. Gardner says that Carleton is the publisher "in cooperation with Street & Smith and American News Co." Bennett says "it is evident that Carleton published the book through an arrangement with Street & Smith. The connection of the American News Co. is unknown."

To unravel what is going on we need to begin with some facts. Starting with the book itself from the outside of the book and working in, American News Co. is imprinted at the bottom of the book's spine.³ This is usually a telltale sign indicating who published the book. For now, let's say The American News Co. is involved somehow. Working inside the book, on the back of the half-title page is the full-page advertisement of **Library of Choice Books** by G. W. Carleton & Co. This ad also mentions the **New York Weekly**, published by Street & Smith. Then, there is the title page giving no indication of the publisher. On the back (verso) of the title page is the copyright notice, stating "Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1878, By Street & Smith."

Continuing on, there is the dedication page which reads "To the readers of the **New York Weekly**, ... this volume is respectfully dedicated by the publishers, Street & Smith." One way to read this implies that Street & Smith is the publisher of *The Western Boy*, although the text does not explicitly say this. Another way to interpret this is the volume is dedicated by a company which itself is the publisher. On the back of the dedication page is a

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2022 convention update

We're looking forward to seeing you in Fredericksburg!

By Jack Bales (PF-258)

I've covered quite a bit in my *Newsboy* articles about Fredericksburg, Virginia, site of the forthcoming Horatio Alger Society convention, and in this final article I want to summarize a few details and wrap things up.

Every so often I have lunch with Chris Jones, the manager of the Hampton Inn and Suites, Fredericksburg-South (right off of I-95). I got to know Chris last year when I hosted the 2021 convention, and he's looking to having us back. The registration form in this issue of *Newsboy* provides the hotel information you need.

NOTE: Chris has graciously extended the Hampton Inn's deadline an extra four days to **Monday, June 13**, for the discounted group room rate of \$89.00.

Our banquet speaker Saturday night will be Scott H. Harris, Executive Director of the University of Mary

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H.A.S. convention host Jack Bales stands next to an abutment designed to carry railroad tracks over a stream. Plans for the Fredericksburg, Virginia, railroad were made in the 1850s, but the Civil War interrupted progress and train service did not begin until the 1870s. The concrete abutment shown here dates back to the 1920s.

Photo by Cedric Rucker

Editor's notebook

It's the home stretch as we await the 2022 Horatio Alger Society convention, "Frank and Fearless in Fredericksburg," on June 23-26. Host Jack Bales has an excellent schedule of events on tap, the updated version which is enclosed with this issue. Also included is the convention registration form, which also has been updated with an extended deadline for reservations at the Hampton Inn for our special rate of \$89 per night. The hotel has kindly given us a new date of Monday, June 13, four days later than the originally announced June 9. Please consider joining us, even if you are a potential first-time attendee.

The Hampton Inn's direct line is (540) 898-5000.

Back in the November-December issue, I discussed dust jackets, and how what was once an enhancement that doubled (or tripled) the collector's value of a book, these days we are seeing a jacket bringing a premium of 10 to 20 times (or much more!) to the book's perceived value, especially on eBay. So, I decided to run the following item gleaned from the Internet back in 2015, saving it for a future notebook. That time is now, so enjoy:

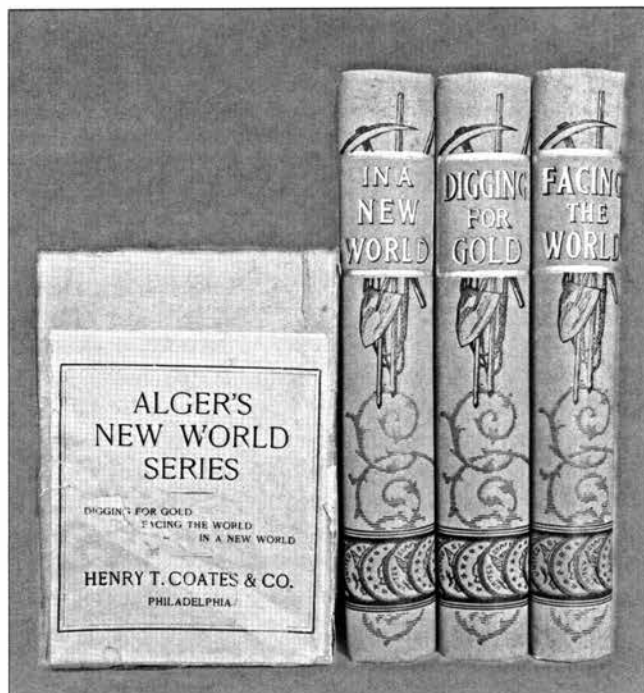
A brief history of the dust jacket

As most collectors are aware, a dust jacket in fine condition can greatly enhance the value of a book. Indeed, for modern first editions, a book without the dust jacket will sell for only a fraction of the price. Once intended to be temporary and disposable protection for beautifully bound books, dust jackets have become — in some ways — more valuable than the books they protect. How and when did this change occur?

Prior to the 1820s, most books were issued as unbound sheets or with disposable board covers. Customers would buy the text-blocks and commission bindings themselves — often to match the other titles in their library. For this reason, dust jackets were neither needed nor desired. Instead of a dust jacket, some printers would protect the exterior with a blank page (called by some a "bastard title").

Besides these temporary boards or blank pages, the earliest version of the dust jacket was a slipcase, or sheath, first seen in the late 18th century. They were essentially small boxes, open on one or both ends, often constructed of pasteboard. The sheaths typically housed literary annuals, gift books, or pocket diaries. Literary annuals were quite popular and during the 1820s, it became common for publishers to print them in sheaths.

According to dust jacket authority G. Thomas Tanselle, it was likely these sheaths that "gave prominence to the idea



Alger's three-volume New World Series (1892-1893), published by Henry T. Coates of Philadelphia, was issued in this slipcase box (viewed from the top) in addition to being sold as individual titles.

of a detachable publisher's covering." Indeed, typographer Ruari McLean asserted that the sheath "can be called the progenitor of the book jacket, since its function was to attract and protect."

In 2009, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, discovered what is often cited as the earliest known example of a dust jacket. It was a paper wrapper for a gift book, bound in silk, titled *Friendship's Offering* (1829). The wrapper was intended to completely enclose the book, and in fact, there remain traces of sealing wax from where the paper was secured. Prior to the discovery of this volume, the earliest-known example was another gift book, *The Keepsake* (1833).

However, it is now considered uncertain whether *Friendship's Offering* is the oldest known dust jacket (although it does seem to be the earliest English language example). The German two-volume *Neues Taschenbuch Von Nürnberg* — surviving in multiple copies — seems to precede *Friendship's Offering* by over a decade. Published in 1819, the set, encased in plain paper dust jackets, describes many of Nürnberg's most famous attractions and personalities, including Albrecht Dürer and Peter Vischer.

It is difficult to ascertain when, exactly, paper wrappers first were employed by publishers, since they were intended to be discarded. In fact, the wrappers were frequently destroyed in the process of opening them — think of all the torn wrapping

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Convention update

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Washington Museums and Director of the James Monroe Museum. Another of the museums he administers is UMW's Belmont. Located in Falmouth, Virginia, across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Belmont was the home and studio of American Impressionist painter Gari Melchers. His house and studio contain original works and furnishings, and the 27-acre grounds include restored gardens and walking trails. The convention's scheduled activity on Saturday afternoon will be a tour of Belmont.

Scott was the banquet speaker for the 2021 Fredericksburg convention, and those in attendance will probably remember his animated comparison of President James Monroe's life to themes found in Horatio Alger's novels. I look forward to Scott's return engagement.

Speaking of animated talks, the Friday morning of each convention traditionally includes a few presentations by members. This year will be no exception, and talks include "But I wrote it: Some Revelations from Autographed Books," by Jeff Looney, and a presentation by Bill Gowen titled "Author James A. Braden: A Son of Ohio." As I mention in a letter to the editor published in this *Newsboy*, I am having a fine time promoting my latest book, and I will present "No Shrinking Violet: Violet Popovich and the Chicago Cub Shot for Love." I will have copies of my book on hand for sale, with all proceeds donated to the Horatio Alger Society's treasury.

The website www.visitfred.com provides much useful information for visitors to the area. A click on **Fredericksburg** and then **Shop** will provide an alphabetical listing of local stores. And one more click, on the **Antiques** section, turns up stores that I visit with some degree of regularity, such as Caroline Square on 914-916 Caroline Street downtown, the Fredericksburg Antique Mall and Clock Shop across the street at 925 Caroline Street, and Riverby Books on 805 Caroline Street.

Other stores on downtown Caroline Street include the Collectors' Den, as well as Blue Shark Antiques and Collectibles. If you are looking for gifts for friends, stop in the Made in Virginia Store at 920 Caroline Street. There is also Beck's Antiques and Books at 708 Caroline Street. Just walk one block east (toward the Rappahannock River), and you can browse the shelves of Southworth Antiques and Rare Books at 919 Sophia Street.

Vehicle parking is free on the city streets, though be careful and observe posted signs. There is also a parking lot on Sophia Street downtown and a parking garage at the corner of Sophia and Wolfe Streets (the first four hours are free and it's \$1.00 for each additional hour).



The gazebo on the grounds of Belmont, the estate and studio of American artist Gari Melchers, located in Falmouth Va., across the Rappahannock river from Fredericksburg. A tour of Belmont for convention attendees is set for Saturday afternoon.

The Fredericksburg Visitors' Center at 706 Caroline Street has numerous brochures and pamphlets available for tourists, some of which I will have in each H.A.S. member's convention packet. The packet will also include a special souvenir: a copy of the well-written, attractively illustrated biography of Horatio Alger, Jr. produced by the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. Several H.A.S. members provided input toward the completion of this 28-page biography, and Association Executive Director Terrence J. Giroux notes that he is "honored and delighted" that convention attendees will each have a copy of it.

I hope those attending "Fame and Fortune in Fredericksburg" can take advantage of at least a few of the various stores and tourist attractions in the Fredericksburg area, some of which had limited (or no) access in 2021 because of the pandemic. I also hope that early arrivals can stop by my home on Wednesday evening for dinner — and, of course, lively and pleasant conversation, as well! 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.

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

of the drawings are done in two colors, charcoal and goldenrod, evoking the hues of the river itself.

Augustus Goes South (1940), finds our hero hunting for pirate treasure in the bayous of Louisiana. In *Augustus and the Mountains* (1941), the clan head for the Kentucky hills in an old jalopy, meet Uncle Lem, a real mountain man, and Augustus befriends an Indian boy. Together, they play detective to catch a mysterious thief.

Augustus Helps the Navy (1942), takes the family back to Penobscot Bay, Maine, to assist in the war effort. Old salt, Cap'n Parker, teaches Augustus all things nautical and soon he and his chum Tom Barnes are sailing the coast, exploring dark coves for hiding Nazi U-boats.

The year 1943 brings us both *Augustus Helps the Army* and *Augustus Helps the Marines*, with Augustus traveling

to Georgia to spend time at an army camp, uncovering sabotage, and then to Florida where he and his sea-going mule, Hezekiah, aid the soldiers of the sea.

Two more instalments arrive in 1944. In *Augustus Drives a Jeep*, the dauntless hero guards the U.S. Army's most valuable secret. *Augustus Flies* finds the lad in Nashville at an airplane factory, building his own glider and searching for a kidnapped jet-propulsion scientist.

Augustus Saves a Ship (1945), sees the family in San Diego where an old friend turns up to crew on the Western

Star, bound across the Pacific. They are invited to tour the boat that night, become stowaways and Augustus ends up foiling some spies.

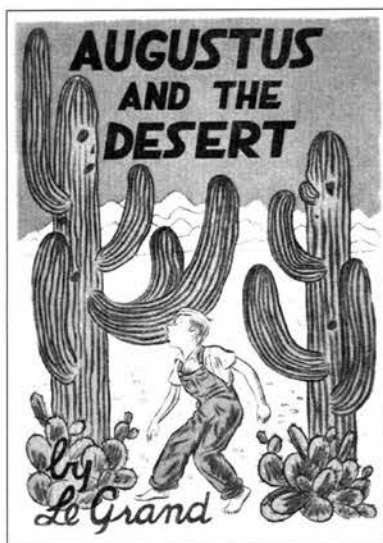
Augustus Hits the Road (1946), has a road trip, a trailer camp, gypsies and some detective work in the mix. *Augustus Rides the Border* (1947), sees the lad and his clan travel to Texas, with burros, sombreros and a boy named Manuel to add salsa to this penultimate tale. The series concludes in 1948 with *Augustus and the Desert*, with Augustus' adventures in the arid Arizona desert, a land of plains Indians, pueblos and rattlesnakes.

All of the books are short, fast-paced and easy reads, chock full of folksy vernacular and humor.

The books were originally published by Bobbs-Merrill with dust jackets of similar style, sporting the author's illustration with many two-color internals. All titles had stated first editions and were of uniform size, approx. 7 1/4" x 10".

The series was reprinted by Grosset & Dunlap with different cover art on the jackets. The original internals were retained, albeit in monochrome. I found it curious that the Mattson & Davis collector's guide failed to include this series, even under the publisher's series appendix.

Your Partic'lar Friend,
James King (PF-1126)
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Editor's notebook

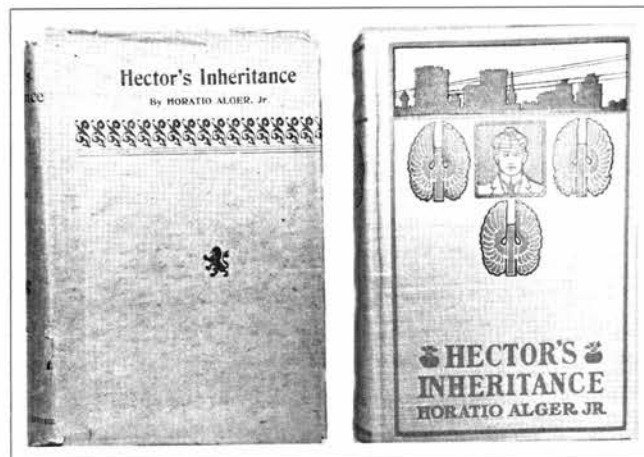
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paper on birthdays or Christmas. Nevertheless, examples have survived from 1829 through the early 20th century.

The modern-style dust jacket was first introduced in the 1830s — although possibly earlier (evidence is inconclusive). Featuring flaps, it was a much-improved design. These dust jackets could remain on the book when it was opened, providing protection for volumes even as they were read.

By the 1870s, dust jackets had become common — although in many cases, they were left blank. A letter from Lewis Carroll to his publisher in 1876 provides insight into how dust jackets were viewed in the period. He requested

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Rare dust jacket for H.T. Coates' Skyline Edition reprint of *Hector's Inheritance* (Porter & Coates, 1885).

The Western Boy: First-edition mystery solved

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second full-page ad by G.W. Carleton & Co.

It is clear from looking at the book that there are three candidates for the first-edition publisher of *The Western Boy*: The American News Co., G.W. Carleton & Co., or Street & Smith. It is also clear that additional sources are needed to clear up this confusion.

A brief discussion of the three companies sheds little light on this mystery.

Street & Smith started in business as the first of the three in 1855, when Amos Williamson sold his publishing business to two of his employees, Francis S. Street and Francis S. Smith.⁴ Quentin Reynolds' book *The Fiction Factory; or From Pulp Row to Quality Street, The Story of 100 Years of Publishing at Street & Smith*, gives a detailed history of the company. He also describes the friendship Horatio Alger developed with both Francis Street and Francis Smith. Alger would write more than a dozen juvenile stories for Street & Smith, and they would eventually put out more than 100 of his books in various editions and formats. So, Street & Smith may be a good candidate as original publisher of *The Western Boy*. It is interesting that G.W. Carleton & Co. isn't mentioned at all in Reynolds' book. The American News Company is briefly discussed as distributing Street & Smith's publications in the 1890s and early 1900s, but nothing is mentioned as far back as the 1870s.

Although in business a few years earlier under a different name, The American News Company was formed

THE AMERICAN NEWS CO. has ready as usual "The American Chatterbox," the new volume for 1878-9, which has over 400 pages of matter, including 250 wood-engravings and a chromo illustration, the matter throughout of American subject and bearing. Horatio Alger, Jr., has a new book for the boys. "The Western Boy; or, The Road to Success," and the Excelsior dollar editions of standard juvenile fiction are a new line this season.

Fig. 1: *The Publishers' Weekly*, Christmas Number 1878, p. 666.

Western Boy The). Alger. \$1.25... ..Am. News Co.

Fig. 2: *The Publishers' Weekly*, Christmas Number 1878, p. 691.

The Western Boy; or, The Road to Success. By Horatio Alger, Jr. 12mo, cloth, \$1.25.

Fig. 3: American News Company's announcement, p. 220.

A NEW BOOK BY HORATIO ALGER, Jr.
READY SEPTEMBER 1st.

THE WESTERN BOY;
Or, The Road to Success.
By HORATIO ALGER, Jr.
Author of "Brave and Bold," "Ragged Dick," "Luck and Pluck," "Tattered Tom."

12mo, CLOTH. RETAIL PRICE, \$1.25.

ADVANCE ORDERS SOLICITED.

The American News Company,
PUBLISHERS,
39 AND 41 CHAMBERS STREET, NEW YORK.

Fig. 4: Advertisement for the upcoming publication of *The Western Boy*, identifying The American News Company as publishers, which appeared in *The American Bookseller* issue of Aug. 15, 1878, page 224.

in 1864, which is when it added publishing to its wholesale distribution of newspapers, periodicals, books and stationery operations.⁵ In her 1966 University of Minnesota research paper, Jane M. Dorn discusses the early years of the company and how their business practices helped the company grow to become both a criticized and admired monopoly. By the mid-1880s, it was said the company was "holding a position like the Western Union in telegraphy."⁶ It grew to become an enormous company that would dominate its industry for decades. Almost as a side business, Street & Smith published more than 400 books before the turn of the century.

Last to start in business was G.W. Carleton & Co., which was incorporated in 1867.⁷ George W. Carleton himself got started in the publishing business in 1857 as a partner in the firm of Rudd and Carleton.⁸ My research uncovered a brief history of the personnel changes that occurred over the years at the company, but there was no mention of a relationship with either Street & Smith or American News Co.

Although not an exhaustive search, these sources and others like Madeleine Stern's *Imprints on History*⁹ bring no additional clarity identifying the publisher of *The Western Boy*.

Digging further, the first thing to address in examining the book is the copyright page. The story, *The Western Boy*, first appeared as a serialization in the *New York Weekly*, published by Street & Smith in 1873.¹⁰ Street

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The Western Boy: First-edition mystery solved

(Continued from Page 7)

& Smith owned the copyright when it was entered in 1873, so it makes sense that they would be noted on the copyright page of *The Western Boy* book. However, it is puzzling why the year is given as 1878 and not 1873, the year when the story first appeared. One could surmise that this is simply a typo on the publisher's part, whoever that may be.

Digging even further, announcements for *The Western Boy* are found in **The Publishers' Weekly** and in **The American Bookseller**. The Christmas Number of **The Publishers' Weekly**, 1878¹¹ has the ad shown in Figure 1, and on a later page in the same issue *The Western Boy* is listed as part of Juvenile Books of the Year.¹² This is shown in Figure 2. Both ads show The American News Co. as the publisher of *The Western Boy*.

The American Bookseller for August 15, 1878 has the announcement for immediate issue for *The Western Boy*.¹³ See Figure 3. In the same issue is an ad for the book by The American News Company, which seems to indicate that they are the publisher of *The Western Boy*. This is shown in Figure 4.¹⁴

The most telling clue identifying who the original book edition publisher was for *The Western Boy* may be the next ad found in **The American Bookseller**.

Just a month after The American News Company announced *The Western Boy*, a full-page advertisement appeared in the Sept. 16, 1878 issue of **The American Bookseller**.¹⁵ This is shown in Figure 5. The full-page ad not only shows The American News Company as the publisher of *The Western Boy*, but the title design, sketch, and subtitle in the ad are identical to that of the title page in the book, and the figures in the sketch are the same as they are

on the front cover of the book. See Figures 6 and 7. It appears that The American News Company is advertising in these two ads that they are the publisher of *The Western Boy*. This would explain why their name is on the spine of the book.

So, who is the first-edition publisher of *The Western Boy*? Besides the two ad pages in the book by G. W. Carleton & Co., and the general mention by them on the first ad page to issue various publications in book form, there is little evidence supporting G.W. Carleton & Co. being the publisher of *The Western Boy*.

There is likewise little evidence supporting Street & Smith being the publisher of *The Western Boy* as a book. Although Street & Smith appear on the copyright page with the 1878 year, which could be a typo, and they wrote the text on the dedication page, according to Reynolds, they didn't branch out beyond publishing newspapers until after Francis Smith died in 1887.¹⁶ They ventured into dime novels in 1889 more than a decade after the book was published. So, it is hard to support Street & Smith being the first publisher of *The Western Boy* in book form.

The strongest evidence identifying who originally published *The Western Boy* book is for The American News Company. Not only is their name on the spine of the book, which is usually a very



Fig. 5: Advertisement announcing the publication of Alger's *The Western Boy*, appearing in **The American Bookseller** issue of Sept. 16, 1878, page 370.

good indication of the publisher of a book, but the ad notices in both **The Publishers' Weekly** and **The American Bookseller** both indicate The American News Company as the publisher of *The Western Boy*. In addition, their ad has the same illustration that is on the front cover of the book, and the same book title, sketch and subtitle that is on the title page of the book. There may have been a business arrangement between all three companies and

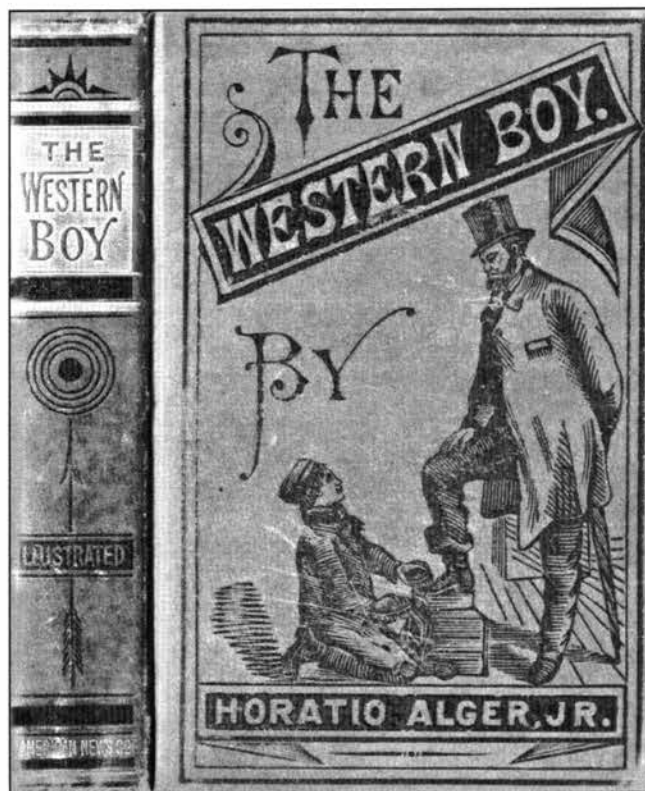
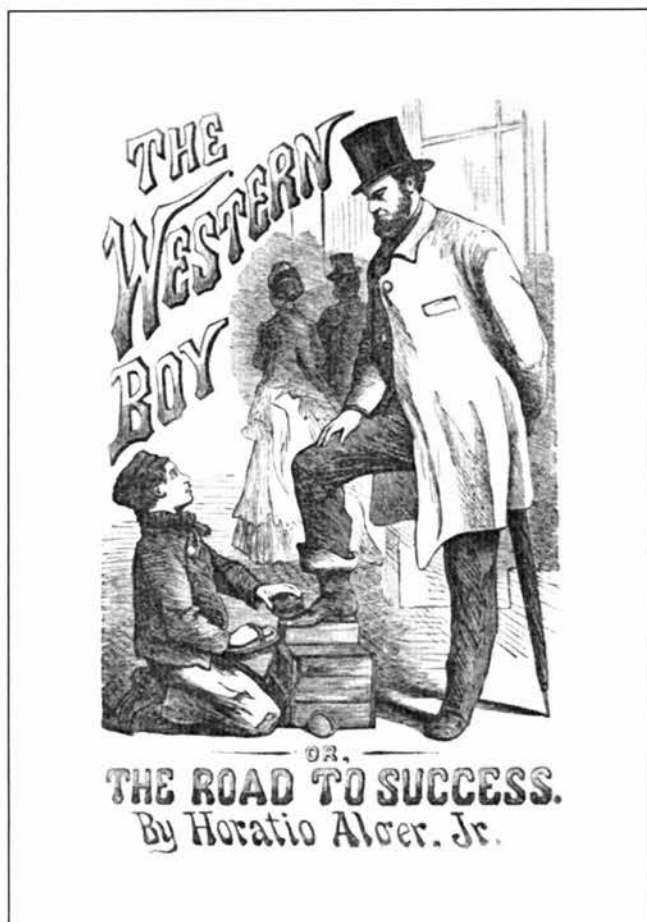


Fig. 6, left: The decorative title page for *The Western Boy* carries the same figures in the sketch shown on the book's cover (Fig. 7, right). "American News Co." is printed in gold lettering at the foot of the book's spine.

Alger, but the preponderance of the evidence leaves little doubt that The American News Company is the publisher of the first book edition of *The Western Boy*.

* * *

Acknowledgements: I want to thank my wife, Lisa, for editing the early versions of this article; and to Rob Kasper (PF-327) for checking the information contained herein and for generously providing the first-edition cover image of *The Western Boy* shown on Page 9.

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10. *New York Weekly*, Vol. 28, Nos. 34-45, June 30-Sept. 15, 1873.
11. *The Publishers' Weekly*, Vol. XIV, Christmas Number – For the Little Folks, 1878, p. 666.
12. Ibid, p. 691.
13. *The American Bookseller*, Vol. VI. No. 4, Aug. 15, 1878, Announcements for Immediate Issue, p. 220
14. Ibid, p. 224.
15. *The American Bookseller*, Vol. VI. No. 6, Sept. 16, 1878, American News Company ad, p. 370
16. Ibid, p. 71.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bill:

I thoroughly enjoyed Scott Chase's article "*Nothing to Wear: A Frenzy*" in the recent January-February issue of **Newsboy**.

Naturally he focused on the books, but I believe the social influence of the "frenzy" was even greater than his closing paragraph would suggest.

We know that the eponymous Flora M'Flimsey was mentioned or used as an archetype in many books of that era, including Louisa May Alcott's "*Little Women*." An 1865 advertisement for Wilcox & Gibbs featured a poem in which Flora is cured of her spendthrift ways by purchasing one of their sewing machines. Beginning in 1864, local Sanitary Commissions would use Flora M'Flimsey dolls for fundraising. A doll would travel through a network of Ladies Aid Society volunteers who would each make nice clothes for her and pack them in her trunk. When the trunk was full and the wardrobe complete, she would be auctioned off at an annual Sanitary Commission fair.

Songs, books, plays, poems, dolls, and even stereoscope cards (above), the pervasive "M'Flimsey frenzy" was everywhere in those days.

I recently come across a poem by Oliver Optic



titled "*Nothing to Do*." This charming children's poem first appeared in 1862 as part of the Riverdale Stories book series. Although it was written for "little folks," it was unmistakably a nod and a wink to the "frenzy" for the amusement of the parents who would read it to them. It is principally concerned with a little girl who wishes to abandon her studies and do nothing all day [Nothing to Do] but play, and within it we find the lines: *And long before evening was cross as a bear — Just like the McFlimsey with "nothing to wear."* [parentheses in original].

One cannot but wonder how many other authors, playwrights or artists of the day paid homage in some way to this fad.

Later that same year, Optic published another little folks book in the same Riverdale series titled *The Do-Somethings*, about a pair of rich kids who form a "society" to help the poor. Coincidence?

In it, the little girl naïvely believes that a "society" is supposed to be "funny." And her name? Flora!

Sincerely,
James King (PF-1126)
President, Horatio Alger Society
711 East Plantation Circle
Plantation, FL 33324
jamesreed9@gmx.com

Dear Bill:

As you know, I've been promoting my book, *The Chicago Cub Shot for Love: A Showgirl's Crime of Passion and the 1932 World Series*, ever since it was published last year. I have given many PowerPoint presentations to groups around the country, and I also contacted a few dozen radio shows and podcasts. One of these was the podcast *History Ago Go* ("eclectic interviews with historians, authors and other interesting guests"), moderated by Rob Mellon.

"Eclectic" is the operative word here. A recent podcast was on "*Mountain Dew: The History, The Hatfield and McCoy Feud Over the Braggin' Rights to Mountain Dew,*" while another was "*George Washington's Hair: How Early Americans Remembered the Founders.*"

Rob is also the Executive Director of the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County in Quincy, Illinois.

After he interviewed me for his podcast, he asked if I would be interested in presenting an in-person program for the historical society. I immediately agreed; I've been to Quincy before, as my mother was born there and family members have lived there all their lives.

My brother Robert, sister Jane, and I drove to Quincy from our hometown, Aurora, Illinois, for my April 24 talk. (Our 95-year-old mother was supposed to go with us, but at the last minute she had to stay home for health reasons.)

I had forgotten just how gorgeous some of the houses are. According to the city's Wikipedia page, "Quincy is home to a diverse and vibrant collection of buildings that have come to be a tourist attraction in and of themselves." I think that is pretty much of an understatement!

My presentation was held in the society's History Museum on the Square, a Richardsonian Romanesque



Jack Bales discusses his recent book *The Chicago Cub Shot for Love*, earlier this spring at the Quincy, Illinois Historical Society.

Photo by Robert Bales

stone building originally built in 1888 as the Quincy Free Public Library and Reading Room. The room where I spoke is called the Stained Glass Gallery and Interpretive Room.

I had a marvelous time, not only talking about the baseball shooting (which indirectly led to Babe Ruth's famous "Called Shot" home run in the 1932 World Series), but chatting with those in attendance and signing all the books they had. In fact, I walked in the door and immediately started signing books that guests had purchased beforehand. Just super-nice people. I'm not surprised that in 2010, *Forbes* magazine referred to Quincy as the eighth "best small city to raise a family."

Over the months I've spent quite a bit of time polishing my talk. I think it's a fascinating story, not only of baseball history but of true-crime intrigue. As I told a newspaper interviewer, "We're talking attempted murder, stolen love letters, blackmail, a burlesque show, sex, and of course baseball. What else is there?"

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

Dear Bill:

Now that we are fairly settled in our new home in Wildomar, we have started to use some of the extra garage space to set up a print shop. We were given a small lever-activated platen press called a Craftsmen Superior, which is a 1940s clone of a Chandler & Price Pilot Press. The "chase," which holds the type and other printing elements, is 6½ x 10 inches.

But printing requires a lot more than a press. Aside from ink and paper, you also need illustrations and type — a lot of type. At printers' fairs in Southern California we have purchased quantities of type. Often it is too small (8 pt.) to be very useful, or we simply do not have enough of it to print even a small passage.

A few years ago I wrote a program to let me keep track of how many pieces of type for each letter that we have in a given typeface. Then, I could paste in a passage I wanted to print and see if I have enough type or if I am "out of sorts." Even for small quotes the type we had was insufficient or too small or italic, so not quite right for what I want to do. Lately, we bought two galley trays of a typeface I think will work for the first project I have in mind.

Part of my interest in letterpress printing stems from Edward Stratemeyer's activity in the same when he was a teen in the 1870s. There are a few small items that he printed on the presses of other people in Elizabeth, New Jersey, that are held in the Stratemeyer Syndicate Records Collection at New York Public Library (box 309).

The earliest is dated 1876 when Edward was 14,



James Keeline's vintage Craftsman Superior platen press, installed in his home print shop.

with the title *Our Friend*. It has the first small part of a story titled "Revenge! or the Newsboy's Adventure." This tiny publication is about ¼ page. It has one very short chapter and the first few sentences of the second chapter. The publisher on the masthead is identified as "Stratemeyer and McNeirny." The latter refers to Frank J. McNeirny (1861-1924) who lived at 11 Elizabeth Avenue, about a mile from Edward's home at 24 Palmer Street in Elizabeth. To a young Stratemeyer, a friend who had a printing press and a bunch of type was fascinating.

Another of Edward's projects was a chapbook, *That*

(Continued on Page 12)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 11)

Bottle of Vinegar (1877) with four pages of text and a crude woodcut illustration. It has a thin yellow paper cover. This time the publisher was Eugene A. Favor (1856-1888), who lived at 237 Pearl Street, about a mile from Stratemeyer's home. Favor was a painter and a contemporary of Edward's next-oldest brother, Louis Charles Stratemeyer (1856-1905).

Stratemeyer used his knowledge of printing later in life, including for the publication of **Our American Boys** in 1883 and in his book production for the Syndicate. He was more involved in the details of typesetting, printing, and illustration of his books than were most authors who were his contemporaries.

Sincerely,
James D. Keeline (PF-898)
21390 Lemon St.
Wildomar, CA 92595
james@keeline.com

Dear Bill:

I bought a software package for cataloging my collection, Recollector, which is something similar to HomeBase, the ABE upload to the Internet database. I'd begun to list my books, alphabetically by author, and had reached the Porter & Coates Alger titles when I realized I had two volumes not listed in Bob Eastlack's P&C article from 2018.

I have copies of *Shifting for Himself* and *Jack's Ward* in a mustard yellow cloth with the Berries/Vines design (left and middle images, below). This is not some shade variant of the known dark brown cover (see the picture of *Risen From the Ranks* from our collection, at right); it is far more yellow or gold than anything else.

So, I wrote to Rob Kasper, figuring he may be of assistance, and he gets back to me and says he's never seen this variant before. Both mustard yellow volumes I have are from the **Brave and Bold Series**, so one might infer that there should be copies of the other two titles in this format also. Both of these titles were originally published by Loring in 1875.

The *Newsboy* articles "Porter & Coates revisited" ap-

peared in Volume LIV Number 6 (November-December 2017) and Volume LV Number 1 (January-February 2018). I had them to hand as I worked through our Porter & Coates Alger, using the format names that had been assigned. When I began listing the mustard-colored copy of *Shifting for Himself* and could not find a reference to that color in the P&C listing, I realized that perhaps I had stumbled on something new.

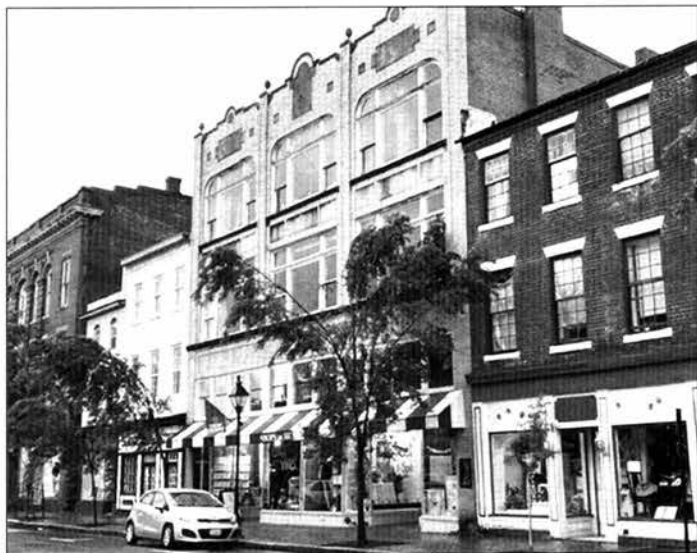
Rob wrote that he, too, thought the variant was not previously recognized, so I figured a letter to the editor could be placed in *Newsboy* so hopefully, other members will also find a few of these variants in their collections. And, by the way, these books were part of Mary Ann's collection before we merged mine with hers in 2001. She thinks they were part of a purchase of P&C Alger she bought locally about 1995.

Good luck with this year's convention!

Sincerely,
Bart J. Nyberg (PF-879)
4657 Mason St.
Omaha, NE 68106
lewarcher@aol.com



Shifting for Himself and *Jack's Ward* in Porter & Coates' Berries/Vines cover format in a mustard yellow cloth variant, compared with the known dark brown cover, at right, for this copy of *Risen from the Ranks*.



Hallmarks of some of the shops in downtown Fredericksburg are loft apartments on top of the buildings. Photo by Jack Bales

Fredericksburg offers plenty for convention visitors

American civil rights pioneer James Farmer served as Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Mary Washington in the 1980s and 1990s. Dr. Farmer was the founder of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and organizer of the famed "Freedom Rides" of 1961. In 1998, President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This bust of Farmer is on the University's Campus Walk, opposite James Farmer Hall. Photo by Jack Bales



Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 6)

that the publisher print the title of his latest book, *The Hunting of the Snark*, on the spine of the "paper wrapper" so that the book would remain in "cleaner and more saleable condition." He goes on to ask that the same be done for his older books, "even those on hand, which are already wrapped in plain paper."

Carroll's letter is evidence of the next stage of dust jacket evolution. From plain paper, publishers began printing titles on the spine of the jacket, allowing customers to view a book from the shelf and know its contents without opening it or removing the paper. While some dust jackets of the 1870s and 1880s did feature printing on the front, back, and flaps, these practices were not common and were instead specific to each publisher.

Through the early 20th century, dust jackets were employed to preserve the ornate bindings underneath. For this reason, although the jackets were common at the time of printing, collecting 19th and 20th century works in dust jacket can prove a challenge. Many owners discarded the jackets, preferring to display the bindings of their books instead.

A fundamental change in attitude occurred in the 1920s. For the first time, publishers began emphasizing the dust jacket instead of the bindings. Although there were some decorative dust jackets before, they generally mimicked the binding design. After World War I, more artists began accepting corporate work, and publishers employed them to design attractive dust jackets.

Moreover, the jackets boasted more information than ever before. Instead of including only a printed title, or perhaps a design similar to the binding, publishers began printing book synopses as well as author biographies. Now, when many authors from the time have become obscure or unknown, their biographical information as preserved on dust jackets has become an important source of knowledge.

Since the 1920s, while graphic design has evolved, dust jackets have remained relatively unchanged. Interestingly, however, there was a brief period in the 1940s when paperbacks were issued in dust jackets.

As the 20th century progressed, dust jackets became increasingly ornate and the bindings beneath correspondingly plain. The golden age of bookbinding came to an end, and the once-disposable dust jacket became an essential component of the book industry.

* * *

The accompanying illustrations were kindly provided by Robert E. Kasper from his Horatio Alger collection.

Written for Gleason's Literary Companion.

THE CLIFTON MORTGAGE.

BY REV. HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Mrs. Clifton had just finished ironing, and seated herself at her sewing, when there was a sound of feet on the graveled walk, and in a minute or two there was a loud knock at the door.

She lay down her work, and going to the front door opened it.

She saw before her Nathan Burton, commonly known as Squire Burton, who lived in the large brick house next to the church.

"Good morning, Mrs. Clifton," said the squire.

"Good morning, sir. Won't you walk in?"

"Thank you, I believe I will. I have a little matter of business with you."

They went together into the little sitting-room, plainly but neatly furnished, and Mrs. Clifton drew forward the rocking-chair in which the squire seated himself.

He was a little man, somewhat inclining to stoutness, with a cheek the color of parchment, and a wily look in his face, which did not impress those who met him favorably.

Mrs. Clifton sat in silent expectation, waiting for him to communicate the business upon which he had come.

"Ahem!" coughed Squire Burton, "I suppose Mrs. Clifton, you are aware that I hold a mortgage on this house to the amount of a thousand dollars."

"I am aware that you hold such a mortgage, but my husband paid you six hundred dollars upon it, but a short time before he died."

"Please to repeat that remark, Mrs. Clifton."

She did so looking at him in some surprise. "I am very much surprised to hear this — very," said the squire. "You are under a strange mistake."

"What do you mean?" demanded the widow, quickly.

"I mean that your husband never made me any such payment. The mortgage remains undiminished."

"Squire Burton" said Mrs. Clifton, slowly, looking him steadily in the face, "what your object in making this assertion is, I will not inquire. I will only say that I *know* my husband



paid you six hundred dollars the week before his death."

"Do you mean to accuse me of intended fraud?" ejaculated the squire, blusteringly.

"I accuse you of nothing. Call it a mistake — call it forgetfulness — but my husband paid you that money."

"Did you see it paid?"

"No."

"How then are you so confident?"

"Because I knew of my husband going to your house on that errand. I saw the money which he counted out in my presence. When he returned he told me it was paid."

"Did he show you a receipt for it?" demanded Squire Burton.

"No," said the widow reluctantly. "He did not."

"And for a very good reason," sneered the squire. "He had none."

"Didn't you give him any?"

"I should if he had paid the money, as a matter of course."

"But he did pay you the money."

"You are mistaken. I will thank you not to say that again."

"But I shall say it and reiterate it!" said Mrs. Clifton warmly. "What could he have done with the money if he had not paid you, I should like to know?"

"I am sure I cannot say," said the squire, carelessly. "You probably know better than I do."

"Why should he say that he had paid you?"

"That is more than I can tell."

"I suppose you have come for something else besides giving me this information," said Mrs. Clifton. "If you have anything more to say I will hear it."

"I have this to say, that I have the right to foreclose the mortgage the first of next month," replied the squire, shortly.

"Do you intend to do it?"

"I don't want to be hard upon you. I am willing to take this cottage off your hands."

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Clifton, bitterly.

"At the most it is not worth over fifteen hundred dollars — I will cancel the mortgage, and pay you five hundred."

You are very generous, Squire Burton."

"I understand you, madam, but the offer is made in kindness to yourself. No doubt you would have a difficulty in raising the thousand dollars, and at auction you would be compelled to sacrifice your property. I don't care much about the house,

This Alger short story first appeared in the August 25, 1866 issue of Gleason's Literary Companion (Vol. VII, No. 34). It subsequently was published in Gleason's Monthly Companion (November 1875), Good News (July 9, 1892), Vickery's Fireside Visitor Aug. 16, 1893) and New Tip Top Weekly, No. 56 (Aug. 23, 1913). This is its initial appearance in Newsboy.

but I will make you a fair offer for it."

"And shall you be willing to accept me as a tenant, when the house has become yours?"

"Why, ahem! I have partly promised to let it to a nephew of mine who is going to move into town in the course of the summer."

"It seems to me, Squire Burton, you are a little precipitate in letting a house that doesn't belong to you."

"I thought you would feel disposed to accept my offer."

"I must have time to think about this. The blow is very unexpected," said Mrs. Clifton.

"Oh, certainly, any reasonable time. Only I can't wait after the time expires. Of course if you can raise the thousand dollars I shall not object to receiving it."

"I presume not, as in that case you must have no resource but to accept it."

"I'll humble her cursed pride," muttered Squire Burton as he left the house, irritated by the contempt which he read in the widow's face. "I've got the whip-hand of her, as she'll find."

Weeks passed. Mrs. Clifton searched the house over for the lost receipt, but could not find it. It was a great mystery. She could not believe that her husband would neglect the precaution of taking a receipt in a matter of such importance. Yet where was it? It was easy to ask the question but hard to answer. She could only conclude that she had lost it, and Squire Burton had found it.

Mr. Clifton had died very suddenly. He was a victim of heart disease, and being attacked in the street, was carried insensible into Squire Burton's office — where medical aid was called. But he was then past help.

It was the night before the day on which the squire would have right to foreclose the mortgage, and still Mrs. Clifton was unprepared to meet it. She sat despondent in the little sitting room when there was a hurried knock at the door. The visitor proved to be Christopher Davenport, a youth of seventeen, who was employed in Squire Burton's office.

"Will you come in, Christopher?" said Mrs. Clifton.

"Thank you, I want to ask you one or two questions. Does Squire Burton hold a mortgage on this house?"

"He does."

"For how much?"

"A thousand dollars."

"Has any of it been paid?"

"He says not, and threatens to foreclose tomorrow."

"But your husband did pay a part—did he not?"

"He paid six hundred dollars, but I have no proof of it."

"Then Mrs. Clifton, I am glad to say that I can give you such proof."

"You can!" exclaimed the widow, joyously and eagerly.

"Yes, here it is," and Christopher drew from his pocket a receipt in form for six hundred dollars, duly signed by Nathan Burton, and made out to Mr. Clifton.

"Where did you get this, Christopher?" asked Mrs. Clifton eagerly.

"Mr. Burton gave me some letters to answer, and in the envelope of one I found this receipt. It must have got in through some carelessness of his. I knew he had no right to it, and I brought it to you."

"You have done me a service I can never forget, Christopher. Have you told any one of this?"

"Only my father, and he bids me say he will send you the balance of the money to pay the mortgage."

"God bless him and you! You have saved me from much misery."

The next day Squire Burton paid another visit to the cottage.

"Well Mrs. Clifton," he said, "have you thought of my offer?"

"I have."

"And will accept it?"

"No."

"Then you have the thousand dollars ready?"

"I am ready to pay you four hundred dollars with interest."

"That won't do, ma'am."

"It must do. My husband paid you six hundred dollars, and I am not disposed to pay it to you twice."

"This is all folly, Mrs. Clifton. You know there is no evidence of that."

"What do you call that, sir?"

Squire Burton started back in dismay when the widow quietly produced the receipt. It was in his mind for a moment to deny his signature, but a moment's reflection convinced him that this would be folly.

"Where did you find this?" he stammered.

"Where you did not intend me to," she answered, coldly.

Squire Burton wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"This has been an awkward mistake," he said at length.

"I — I believe I am growing forgetful. I hope you will not think —"

"I had better not tell you what I think," said Mrs. Clifton, coldly.

"Don't trouble yourself about the four hundred dollars. It can remain on the mortgage at present."

"I propose to pay it to-day. Henceforth, Squire Burton, there can be no business relations between us. And now as this house is wholly mine I must ask you never again to enter it."

Squire Burton left the house angry and discomfited. To this day he does not understand how the lost receipt found its way into Mrs. Clifton's hands.

TREASURER'S REPORT

May 1, 2021-April 30, 2022

INCOME

Dues income.....	\$2,675.00
Auction income.....	6,577.00
Strive & Succeed Award income.....	1,125.00
H.A.A. Consulting fee.....	5,000.00
Advertising income.....	0.00
Merchandise income.....	0.00
Interest income.....	0.26
Misc. income (EA Grant).....	2,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$17,877.26

EXPENSES

Newsboy expenses:

Printing.....	2,320.77
Postage.....	1,012.90
Envelopes.....	0.00
Equipment.....	0.00
Editor's expenses	37.14
Total Newsboy expenses	3,370.81
Convention expenses.....	0.00
Auction consignment payouts.....	4,214.75
Strive & Succeed Award.....	1,000.00
Stipends.....	400.00
Miscellaneous.....	440.21

Administration:

PayPal charges.....	4.81
Web Hosting	311.76
Domain Registration	18.99
Bank charges.....	0.00
Total administration expenses.....	335.56

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$9,761.33**

NET INCOME/(Loss) **\$8,115.93**

Balance sheet as of April 30, 2022

ASSETS

Chesapeake Bank Operating Account ...	\$21,602.32
Chesapeake Bank Reserve Account.....	2,500.26
PayPal Holdings	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$24,102.58

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Equity:

Opening balance, equity.....	4,763.05
Retained earnings	11,223.60
Net income	8,115.93

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY **\$24,102.58**

Submitted by Robert E. Kasper, Treasurer, May 4, 2022

MEMBERSHIP

New phone number

William Leitner (PF-381)
(561) 923-5473

Official H.A.S. addresses

*Direct all official correspondence,
including changes of address, to:*

Horatio Alger Society
1004 School St.
Shelbyville, IN 46176

Send all dues renewal payments to:

Horatio Alger Society
c/o Robert E. Kasper
4940 Old Main St.
Henrico, VA 23231