



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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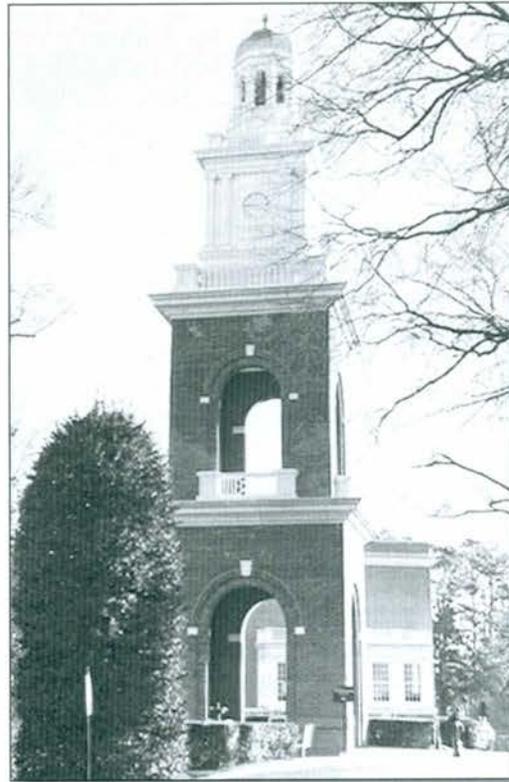
'Forging Ahead in Fredericksburg'

Final preview article, plus updated schedule

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The *campanile* (bell tower) on the campus of the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. For another photo and additional information about this historic landmark, see Page 8.

Photo by Jack Bales



A World War II-era perspective:

The wonderful Tom Swift

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*Want a shoe shine?
Today, it's not easy*

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President's column

I, (like many of us, I suppose), have collected a fair number of series books which I have not yet gotten round to reading. Until recently, such was the case with one of the oldest series in my collection, the much-maligned Rollo's Tour of Europe series from the prolific pen of Jacob Abbott.

Abbott was one the first major children's authors in mid-19th century America, when stories for children existed primarily as vehicles for imparting knowledge, religion or morality. As a minister, he was ideally suited to continuing this tradition.

Although he started writing his children's books only 23 years after John David Wyss published the seminal *Der Schweizerische Robinson* (The Swiss Family Robinson), and was a contemporary of Captain Frederick Marryat, his Rollo series is more a descendant of Maria Edgeworth's *Moral Tales for Young People* (1805) or Charlotte Smith's *Rural Walks* (1795) and *Rambles Farther* (1796) than either of the above.

It should be noted that his closest literary contemporary, Samuel Griswold Goodrich, writing as Peter Parley, while similarly prolific, was producing works in an entirely different style. Goodrich wrote for the school, whereas Abbott wrote for the home, or in some cases, Sunday School.

The stories in the Rollo series, e.g., *Rollo at Work*, *Rollo at Play*, *Rollo at School*, etc., are mere threadbare backdrops to central dialogue between Rollo and an adult, concerning the natural world, human nature, basic scientific, mathematical and English educational instruction and the moral precepts of the day. These concepts and others are explored in the later books, *Rollo's Experiments*, *Rollo's Museum*, *Rollo's Travels*, *Rollo's Correspondence* and the Rollo "Philosophy" books.

Rollo's friends and family members, such as Thanny, Lucy, Jonas and Mr. George are introduced in this series. Cousin Lucy and Jonas each get their own "'spin-off'" series, populated by the supporting characters of this fictitious world. Rollo makes cameo appearances in some of those stories.

These are stories that tax the patience of most modern adult readers, but they were apparently quite popular with children of that time and for several generations thereafter.

The books of Rollo's Tour of Europe are perhaps the most enduring of all the Rollo stories for today's

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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.

Convention preview: Events promise a fun-filled weekend

'Forging Ahead in Fredericksburg'

By Jack Bales (PF-258)

"Forging Ahead in Fredericksburg" will be the third H.A.S. convention in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and early in its planning stages I decided to include a variety of events and speakers—and perhaps a couple of new activities, as well. Fredericksburg is an attractive, historic city—located halfway between Richmond and Washington, D.C.—and I think the motorized "trolley tour" of the city Saturday afternoon will appeal to all convention attendees. (See the November-December 2022 *Newsboy* for additional details.)

As at past conventions, the Hampton Inn's hospitality room will be open most of each day, and the convivial atmosphere always sparks fascinating and lively conversations among those present. In fact, at the past two conventions I've observed people circling around from group to group as they try to take everything in.

Was there a way to bring some of these spirited exchanges together? Board member Debby Jones emailed me with an idea I immediately seized on. She wrote: "With as many books as I have, I would love to have the opportunity to sit in a mini-seminar at the convention during an hour or so of the vast free time we have and learn from an expert in the field about publishers, first editions, etc."

Thus inspired, I emailed some of the Society's veteran collectors and asked if they could join a "panel" of sorts and discuss the fundamentals of collecting Alger books. Topics could include editions, publishers, book values—including the values of various reprint editions—and, of course, much more. One H.A.S. member volunteered to serve as moderator, and we both agreed that participation and questions from

those in attendance would go far to keep the debate intriguing for everyone.

Last year Jessica Dirks of the local Big Brothers Big Sisters was instrumental in finding a top-notch candidate for our **Strive & Succeed Award**, and I'm pleased to say that she came through again this year. She emailed a lengthy nominating letter for one young woman, Disaya Spinner, noting that at a young age, her father "had experienced multiple strokes while her mother attempted to provide for the family while battling degenerative arthritis." Disaya herself struggled with her own health problems, including gastrointestinal disorders, "which led to periods of missed school. When she

did attend school, she experienced bullying by her peers which only exacerbated her health concerns."

I'm pleased to say that she will be graduating high school in May and will be attending a local community college before transferring to a college or university. As Jessica told me, she brought her grades "from failing to passing all subjects with mostly As and Bs ... and is feeling hopeful for the future."

I look forward to meeting Disaya at our Friday dinner and reading Jessica's nominating letter to

Society members. By the way, as noted on page 16 of the January-February 2023 issue of *Newsboy*, the H.A.S. depends on the generosity of its members to fund the annual Strive & Succeed Award. Please consider a donation in 2023 so that we can continue to assist high school seniors defray their college expenses.

One of the highlights of our banquet Saturday evening will be a PowerPoint presentation by the University of Mary Washington's Angie Kemp, Interim Head

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The "Brompton Oak" was a mature tree in 1864 when photographer Mathew Brady took a photograph of wounded Union soldiers resting beneath it. Brompton, now the home of the president of the University of Mary Washington, was a hospital for Union troops at that time, and it can be seen here beneath the majestic tree's outspread branches.

Photo by Jack Bales

Editor's notebook

We're down to the final month before the 2023 convntion, "Forging Ahead in Fredericksburg," welcomes Horatio Alger Society members, along with family and friends, to what we expect will be another successful get-together. Convention host Jack Bales has added some new and different events in addition to the traditional activities, all of which are outlined on the enclosed updated schedule. The weekend will kick off with an informal get-together at Bales' home on Wednesday evening, May 3. Again, he will offer a free buffet meal from the University of Mary Washington catering service.



Awards banquet guest speaker Angie Kemp.

In this issue, Bales announces the speaker for our annual awards banquet: Angie Kemp, Interim Head of Special Collections & University Archives, whose PowerPoint talk is titled "Adventures, Gems, & Treasures: Stories from UMW's Special Collections & University Archives."

Also in his preview article, Bales gives some advance background on our **Strive & Succeed Award** recipient, Disaya Spinner, who has overcome numerous family and personal obstacles while growing up, and will earn her high school diploma in May and attend an area community college in the fall.

Two final reminders: Don't forget the firm hotel reservation deadline at the Hampton Inn is **April 20** (phone the front deak at **(540) 898-5000**. You can cancel with no penalty right up to the day of arrival).

Also, please donate some books for the annual auction. If you can't attend in person, ship them to Bales at his home address listed on the enclosed registration form.

Strive & Succeed Award

Bill Stone (PF 1113) was inadvertently left off the published list of annual **Strive & Succeed Award** donors appearing each year in the January-February issue. A regular supporter of our S&S Award fund, we thank him for reminding us of this omission.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Jack and Dick Bales' collection of books by Charles Pierce Burton, author of, among other books, the 12 volumes in the "Bob's Hill" series. (Photo by Dick Bales)

Dear Bill,

As I mentioned in the November-December *Newsboy*, while my twin brother, Dick, and I were growing up in Aurora, Illinois, we read our father's Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott books by Leo Edwards. Dick and I also read his "Bob's Hill" volumes by Charles Pierce Burton (1862-1947). Burton had been a local resident—something of a celebrity, in fact—and since Dad knew him slightly, he had the author sign his two books. Burton inscribed in *The Bob's Hill Braves* (1910), which takes place in Aurora, "Bob's Hill is a real hill in Adams, Mass., where the writer of this story played when a boy."

Burton's books are much harder to find than Leo Edwards' works, but Dick and I managed to find a complete set of them. (And just like with Jerry Todd, we are grateful for the assistance of you and Jeff Looney in building our collection.) I remember asking our father why he had only two Burton stories, and he said he believed they were more expensive than the typical series books of the time.

In this photo, signed volumes (indicated by slips of paper) include the two books inscribed to our father, two copies of Burton's first book, *The Bashful Man, and Others*, published in 1902 in a limited edition of 500, as well as another copy signed by Burton's son Laurence.

Two of the author's three children lived in Illinois until they died. How I wish Dick and I had tracked them down for a talk or two about their father and his books!

Sincerely,
Jack Bales
422 Greenbrier Court
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
jbales@umw.edu

Convention preview: 'Booking it' for 2023

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of Special Collections & University Archives. In her "Adventures, Gems, & Treasures: Stories from UMW's Special Collections & University Archives," Angie will share stories and photographs of the many gems and treasures that make UMW's special collections distinct and unique. She will also discuss the present and future of Special Collections & University Archives, as the department continues to change and adapt within the digital age, and through campus and community partnerships.

This issue of *Newsboy* will be the last you will receive before the convention, so it still gives you time to make your room reservation at the Hampton Inn & Suites if you have not already done so. Just phone the front desk at (540) 898-5000. The firm cutoff date for our special \$89 (plus tax) nightly room rate is April 20. If you must cancel (without penalty), just call this number by 4 p.m. on the scheduled day of arrival.

In these pages and in recent previous issues, I've highlighted much in the local area that H.A.S. members can see and experience while they are doing their own "forging ahead" here in Fredericksburg. Along with our convention registration form, an updated schedule of events is enclosed I will be pleased to see you here from May 4-7.



This frame building, the "Innis House," was built between 1856 and 1861 and was the home of John and Ellen Innis. Located along the famed Sunken Road, the house was caught in the crossfire between the Confederate and Union armies during the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1863, and bullet holes and marks of shell fragments are still visible today. The National Park Service acquired the Innis House in 1969.



(Photos by Jack Bales)

NIU Horatio Alger fellowship applications now being accepted

The Northern Illinois University Libraries, with funding provided by the Horatio Alger Society, offers a fellowship to scholars who wish to come to NIU in DeKalb to conduct research using the libraries' major holdings in American popular culture. These include the nation's preeminent Horatio Alger, Jr. collection and the Albert Johanssen and Edward T. LeBlanc collections of more than 50,000 dime novels. The fellowship provides up to \$2,000 to a visiting scholar. Travel arrangements will be made by the recipient. They will submit a budget as part of the application and will be reimbursed after the fellowship is completed.

Fellowship terms and expectations

- Fellows will present a talk for NIU, either in person or virtually, on the results of their research within one year of completing the fellowship.
- Fellows will be encouraged to deposit scholarship resulting from the fellowship into the Huskie Commons institutional repository (<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/>).

• Fellows will credit the Endowment and NIU Libraries in publications resulting from their research. A workspace in the library will be provided, and library faculty and staff will provide research assistance to the fellows.

Eligibility: Faculty members, independent scholars, graduate students, and librarians currently based in or outside the United States are eligible to apply. NIU Libraries will provide a letter of invitation that the visiting scholar may use to apply for visa to travel to the United States. It is the responsibility of the scholar to obtain the visa, including paying for visa fees in advance.

Timeline: Applications are accepted January-April for the 30-day fellowship in the following June-May. Applicants will be informed of the decision by May 1. For a 2024 fellowship, applicants must complete and submit the library's online application form and email a current CV and two (2) letters of recommendation to rbsc@niu.edu no later than **April 30, 2023**. For a link to the application form, write rbsc@niu.edu or phone (815) 753-9838.

President's column

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reader. Certainly, there are moral lessons about honesty, thrift, honour and propriety interwoven in the stories, along with admonitions about gambling and prejudicial perspectives about foreign races and ethnicities, but it is largely a travelogue from the 1850s. And therein lies its charm.

Rollo and his entourage are our guides. We see a transatlantic crossing and Rollo's Grand Tour through their eyes. It forms a remarkable first-person account of a trip through these European countries, as a person in the 1850s would have experienced it. Abbott had travelled to Europe several times, beginning in 1848, and drew upon those experiences in writing the Rollo travel books as well as the later Florence series.

First, *Rollo on the Atlantic* (1853), details a transatlantic crossing to England in a side-paddle steamer, a new technology just beginning to challenge the sailing ship. Day-to-day life aboard is portrayed, as are the maritime customs, ship's command and procedures. As a cautionary tale, a corrupt lottery is recounted. Traditions and practices of the ports, disembarkation, baggage handling, customs procedures, public transport, changing currencies, dining and hostelry are all detailed.

The second book, *Rollo in Paris* (1854), depicts a tourist's typical itinerary in crossing the English Channel and traveling over land by omnibus and the nascent railway to this European capital. Included are many customs, sights, hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions and pastimes, most of which are now long gone.

The third book, *Rollo in Switzerland* (1854), continues the journey to the Swiss Alps, narrating the passport procedure, border crossings, modes of transport, a primer on glaciers, local customs and traditions, many now lost to time and tide.

Book four, *Rollo in London* (1855), gives a fascinating brief history of the growth of London and a contemporary overview, describing the London Tunnel, the Ragged Schools, The Tower, a tourist's excursion through St.

Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey (parts of which are off limits today), the expansive docklands in the days of empire and Queen Victoria early in her reign.

The remaining books, *On the Rhine* (1855), *In Scotland* (1856), *In Geneva* (1857), *In Holland* (1857), *In Naples* (1858), and *In Rome* (1858), follow the same formula, describing the salient features, history and customs of a destination and providing useful tourist information, "... strictly in accordance with fact," as proclaimed by the author in his introduction.

Rollo's storyline, his travels, perambulations and adventures, such as they are, serve merely to bind the scenic travelogue narrative together. They are usually not compelling in and of themselves, and with rare exception do not create any meaningful suspense or dilemmas. In that way, they reflect the Rollo series, but here the content is much more engaging.

The books are generously illustrated and bound in uniform cloth boards. Detailed edition information on this and all his other books may be found at the Jacob Abbott website, <http://www.jacobabbott.com>, created by immediate past H.A.S. President Cary Sternick, to whom I give credit and thanks for some of the information provided here.

I have left to our capable host, Jack Bales, the particulars of our upcoming convention on May 4-7, to be found in this issue, but I should like to take this final opportunity to call upon our members to consider donating or

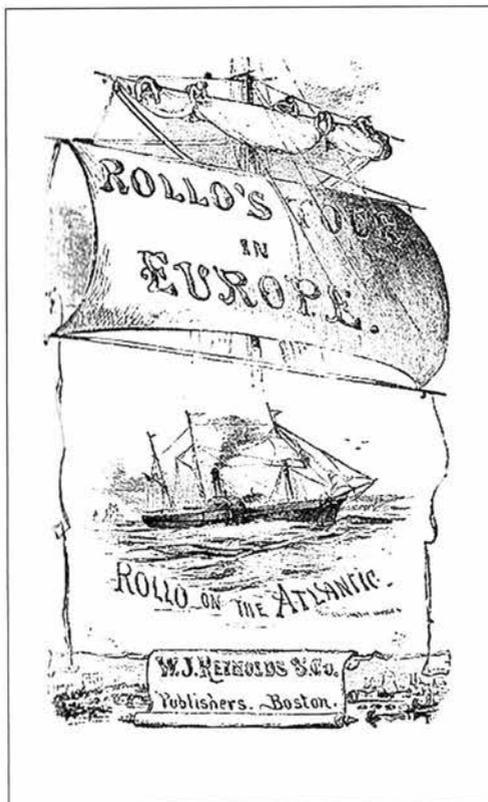
consigning books for our fund-raising auction.

It is anticipated that we'll be light on submissions this year, and the convention's book auction is a primary source of revenue for our society. Books may be mailed to Jack Bales, at his address listed on the enclosed registration form. An updated schedule of events is also enclosed. Please give generously.

Hope to see you in Fredericksburg.

Until then, I remain,

Your Humble Servant,
James King (PF-1126)
711 East Plantation Circle
Plantation, FL 33324
(954) 473-6927
Email: jamesreed9@gmx.com



Want a shoe shine? Today, it's not easy

NEW YORK — On a recent winter weekday at Penn Station Shoe Repair and Shoe Shine, men hop onto shoeshine chairs and pull out newspapers and phones to read while shoeshiners get to work applying polish and elbow grease to loafers, boots and other leather shoes. When finished, these customers hand over \$8 in cash at a counter where a sign reads “We’re not God, but we do save soles.”

Shoe shining has a long history in the United States. In the 1860s, Horatio Alger, Jr. popularized the “rags-to-riches” American narrative with his book *Ragged Dick* about a shoeshiner (or “bootblack”) who works his way up to wealth. “Shoeshine boys” (and occasional girls) have over the decades been depicted in countless movies and television shows ranging from classics like Vittorio De Sica’s 1946 “Shoeshine,” to racist caricatures of Black shoeshiners.

Today, the tradition of getting a quick polish from a rag-toting shoeshiner is greatly diminished, and many stands similar to the one in Penn Station have disappeared across the country. The decline has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working and the rise in popularity of more casual workwear when people did return to the office. SC Johnson, which makes the biggest shoe polish brand, Kiwi, even said in January that it had stopped selling the brand in the United Kingdom due to softening demand (they still sell it in the U.S.)

The last time the Census listed shoeshining as a discrete business was 2007, when only 30 establishments were counted. The more-encompassing shoe repair market has declined an estimated 23 per cent between 2013 and 2023 to \$307 million, according to market research firm IBISWorld.

Shoe polish sales in 2022 totaled 27.3 million units, down 29 per cent compared with 2019, according to figures from Nielsen, a sign of the changes brought on by the pandemic.

Nisan Khaimov, who owns the Penn Station stand, said his stand would shine 80 to 100 shoes each workday before the pandemic. Now it’s between 30 to 50 on Tuesday to Thursday, and even fewer on Mondays and Fridays. Hybrid work is hurting his business.

“Until people come back to work, the problems will not be solved,” said Khaimov, who benefits from commuters traveling in and out of New York City who



A shoe-shine boy plies his trade in New York City well over a century ago. Today, although shoe shine stands have primarily shifted from the street to inside train stations and bus terminals, there has been a drastic decline in the profession due to changing commuting habits and dress codes. A major contributing cause has been the COVID-19 pandemic, leading many to work remotely from home.

can’t get their shoes shined where they live. “And it’s not good for landlords and for tenants also like us. So, we’re waiting. But eventually it will go back to normal, we hope. But when we don’t know.”

Rory Heenan, 38, an accountant in Philadelphia, said that as a young boy he would take the train with his father on his way to work one Friday each month and watch him get a shoeshine.

“I would just sit here as a little guy, you know, observing,” he said. “And here I am, you know, 30 years later, doing the same thing. So, it’s certainly something that’s passed down over time.”

Across town, in the corridor between the subway and The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey bus terminal, Jairo Cardenas is also feeling the pinch. Business at Alpha Shoes Repair Corp., which he’s run for 33 years, is down 75 per cent compared with prior to the pandemic. He’s down to one shoeshiner, from the three he employed before the pandemic. His shoeshiners used to shine 60 or 70 shoes a day. Now a good day is 10 to 15 shines.

Cardenas’ landlord gave him a break on rent, but he’s still struggling, and has seen several other shoeshine stores in the area close. Still, he is noticing an uptick in

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The University of Mary Washington's pedestrian bridge over U.S. Route 1 links the main campus (at right) to the university's "Eagle Village" complex. Photo by Jack Bales

Places to visit in Fredericksburg



Fredericksburg's Rising Sun Tavern was originally built in around 1760 by George Washington's youngest brother, Charles. Members of the Washington family lived there until about 1780. From the early 1790s to about 1820 it was operated as a tavern. Morgan Riley, Wikimedia Commons



The 88-foot-tall *campanile*, or bell tower, on the UMW campus. During commencement each May, graduating students walk through the Georgian Revival tower and down Campus Walk as the bells ring overhead. Photo by Jack Bales



The Richard Kirkland monument at the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center. As Union soldiers tried to storm the hill at Marye's Heights during the Battle of Fredericksburg on Dec. 13, 1862, Confederate forces repelled them with heavy gunfire. Wounded men littered the battlefield, and Confederate Sergeant Richard Kirkland filled canteens with water, providing some temporary relief. Men on both sides called him "The Angel of Marye's Heights." Photo by Jack Bales



The University of Mary Washington's original outdoor amphitheater was built in the early 1920s with a wooden stage and benches, then expanded with steel and concrete before it, too, went into disrepair over the years. This most recent thorough renovation was completed in 2018.

Photo by Jack Bales



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 to protest segregated bus terminals. In 1998, President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This bust on Campus Walk was dedicated in 2001.

Photo by Jack Bales



The museum shop, located just inside the visitors' entrance to the Fredericksburg National Military Park.



By popular demand, Castiglia's Italian Restaurant will host the Horatio Alger Society's Friday buffet-style dinner for the second straight year.

Photo by Jack Bales



The Chimneys, built in around 1771, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of several historic Fredericksburg buildings purportedly haunted (for a few of them, see article in September-October 2021 *Newsboy*). Wikipelli, Wikimedia Commons

Today's vanishing shoe-shine stand

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people returning to work and hopes business slowly returns to normal by the spring.

Shoe repairs typically bring in more money than shines. At David Mesquita's Leather Spa, which operates five shoe repair and shoeshine businesses, including two in Grand Central, the bulk of the business comes from shoe, handbag and garment repair. But shoeshines are still a key offering to draw people in to Leather Spa locations since they're not available everywhere.

Pre-pandemic, Leather Spa had four shoeshine chairs in Grand Central and six shoeshiners rotating, who would do about 120 shines a day. Nowadays, there are three shoeshiners who do 40 or 50 shines on the best days.

But Mesquita is seeing people slowly coming back. His December 2022 shoeshine numbers were up 52 per cent compared with December 2021. Mondays and Fridays are less busy than the middle of the week due to office workers' hybrid schedules.

"Traffic is slowly coming back in, we're seeing the commuters come in and everything, but we're still not back 100 per cent of what we were," Mesquita said.

Mesquita said shoeshining is not something that will go away completely.

"I think it's just a little luxury," he said. "People like

to treat themselves, you know, whether it's once a week or twice a week or, you know, once every two weeks. It's just nice."

Besides big city transit hubs, airports are one of the few remaining spots to reliably get a shoeshine. Jill Wright owns Executive Shine, which operates shoeshine stations in the Denver and Charlotte airports. Her business was devastated when air travel shut down.

When airports started to reopen, they were empty. The only people getting their shoes shined were pilots and crew, she said, which kept her company in business. Now, Wright says her businesses is still just 35 per cent of what it was in 2019. "Travel has really changed,"

she said. "Companies are starting to come back but not to the degree that they were."

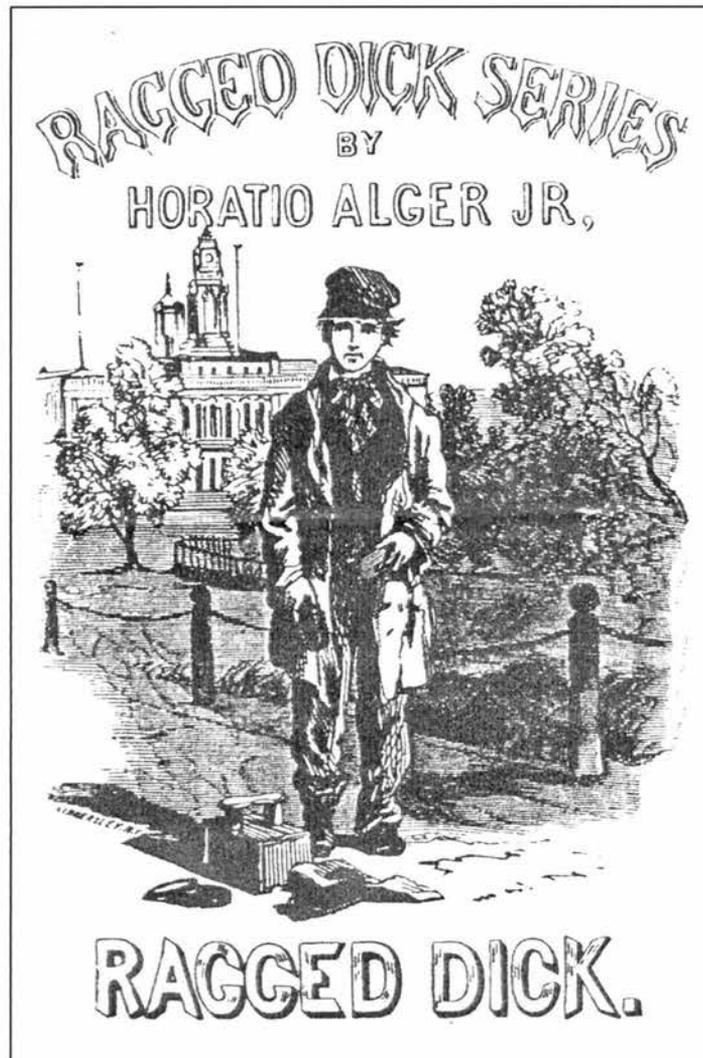
Business travel is rebounding, but the U.S. Travel Association predicts 2023 business trips will still be down 10 per cent from 2019, and will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. Meanwhile, people are dressing differently when they travel. Instead of traveling in workwear, some travelers that still want to get their shoes shined will travel in tennis shoes, pull out their dress shoes to get a shine, and then put them back in their bag, Wright said.

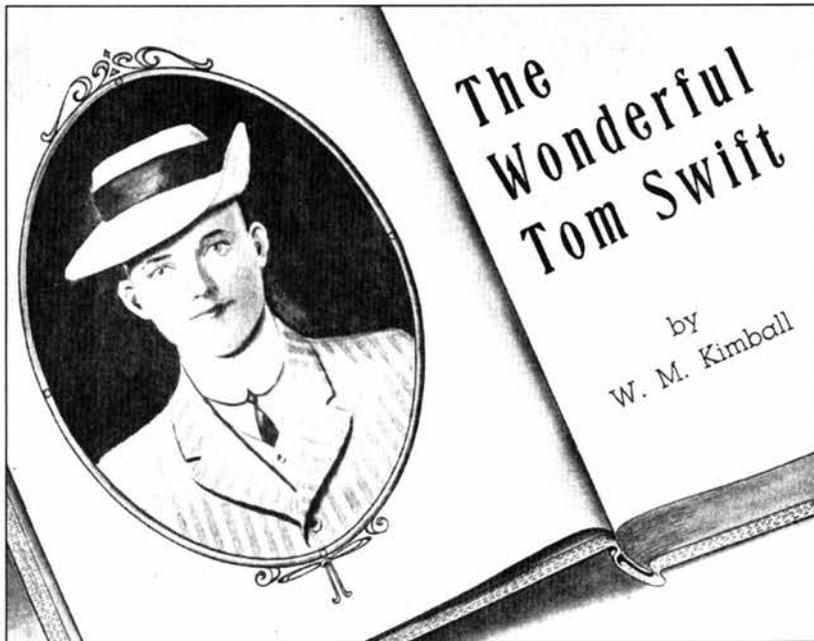
Like Mesquita, Wright expects demand for shoeshines will never go away completely, because it's more than just a transactional service. A shine is a moment of connection between two people, particularly at an airport where there is a

lot of rushing around and stress, she said.

"People come for a shoeshine, but they also come for the connection and for the conversation and just for a place to relax and talk and be seen and feel some compassion," she said.

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The fictional Tom Swift set the kids dreaming 30 years ago, and today those dreams are real. His inventions came true.

Original Tom Swift art reproduced by arrangement with The Stratemeyer Syndicate and Grosset & Dunlap

This article appeared in the August 1942 issue of *Mechanix Illustrated*.

There's a fellow who never got outside the board covers of his books who is going to do a lot to win this war. He's still stalking through pages of new adventures — still the "intrepid young inventor" — still the keen-eyed stalwart who began his career of genius on a motorcycle.

He's the fellow who invented ALL the machines in use on the far-flung fronts of war today — in fiction. Who could this youth be who gave the world his "Aerial Warship," the "Submarine Boat," the "Sky Train," the "Giant Cannon," the "Photo Telephone"?

In short, as Victor Appleton, his creator would say, who could this youth be other than the wonderful TOM SWIFT?

To "Victor Appleton" must go the credit for endowing young Tom Swift with the vision and ability of a thousand scientific minds — the credit for constructing from the mere glimmer of a scientific report fantastic machines that operated on land, under the sea and in the air — just as they operate today some *thirty-odd years* after the first Tom Swift book was published.

Some of us creaky oldsters remember the fictional birth of Tom Swift in the volume *Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle* [1910]. We remember the surreptitious borrowings, the Tom Swift sessions in the haymow and the forbidden reading by flashlight under the covers after the rest of the house had retired.

And some of the young fellows — riding dispatches in Australia now on modern counterparts of Tom Swift's wonderful machine — can remember digging that same book out from a dusty attic pile on a rainy day.

Tom Swift is responsible in a good measure for imbuing Americans with the respect and admiration for mechanical perfection that will, when this war is over, be the distinctive mark of America's armed forces.

Tom Swift never was licked. He never had a failure that remained a failure. And his inventive genius could not have been surpassed by a composite Edison, Steinmetz, Simon Lake, the Wright brothers and Marconi.

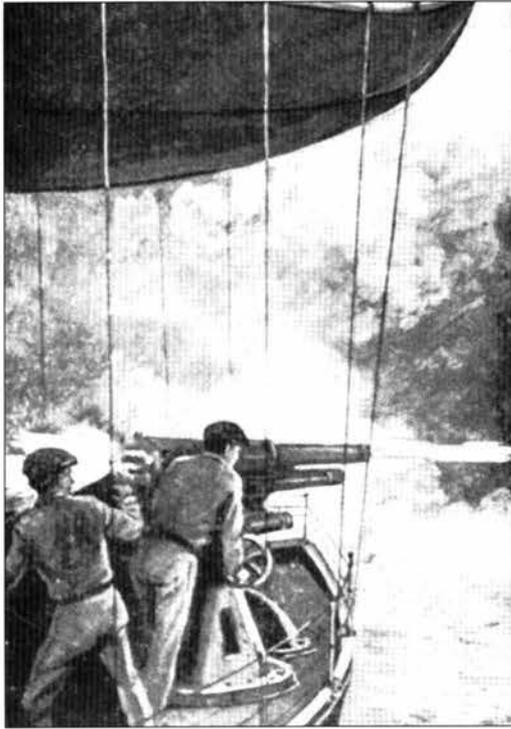
He was the Captain Marvel of his day, triumphing over evil in the form of "that sneak, Andy Fogger" and his foul companions, Sam Snedecker and Pete Bailey.

The tools of "a syndicate of rich men," the Happy Harry Gang, set upon Tom as on his motor cycle, he sped his father's "valuable patent model" from the fictional [upstate New York] town of Shopton toward Albany — and thus launched Tom Swift on a career that has been told and retold in some 7,500,000 volumes.

Tom's progress thereafter in the scientific world was as swift as his name. No sooner had his motorcycle adventure ended than he was afloat in his motorboat *Arrow* on the waters of Lake Carlopa. He bested Andy Fogger and his ilk there in a thrilling race.

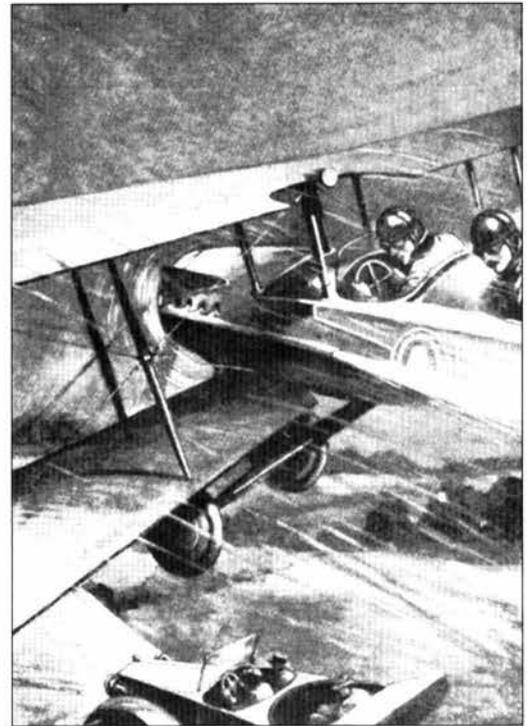
His adventures included the rescue of "an intrepid aeronaut" when aeronauts were called just that and rode aloft in gas-filled balloons. The aeronaut became Tom's staunch friend — and paved the way for Tom's adventures in the air. And Tom had other friends too. Few of us will forget the ever-cheerful Wakefield Damon [original owner of the motor cycle] and his knack of brightening up critical situations with "Bless

(Continued on Page 13)



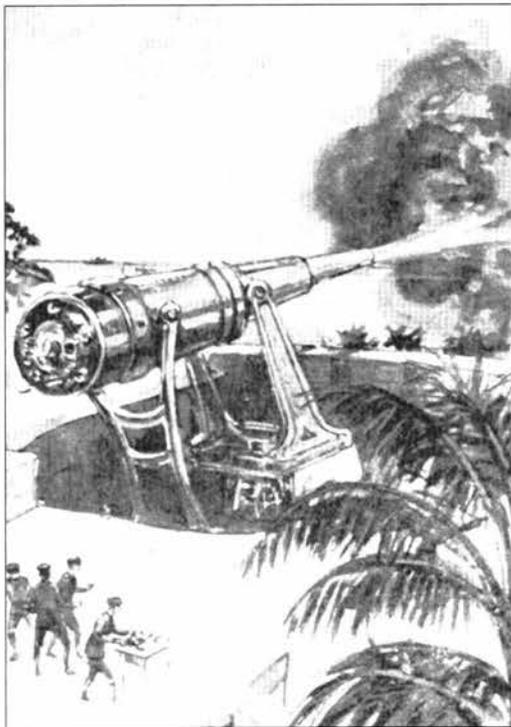
**THERE WAS A MOMENT OF WAITING,
AND THEN CAME A TREMENDOUS ROAR.**

Tom Swift and his Aerial Warship, Page 163



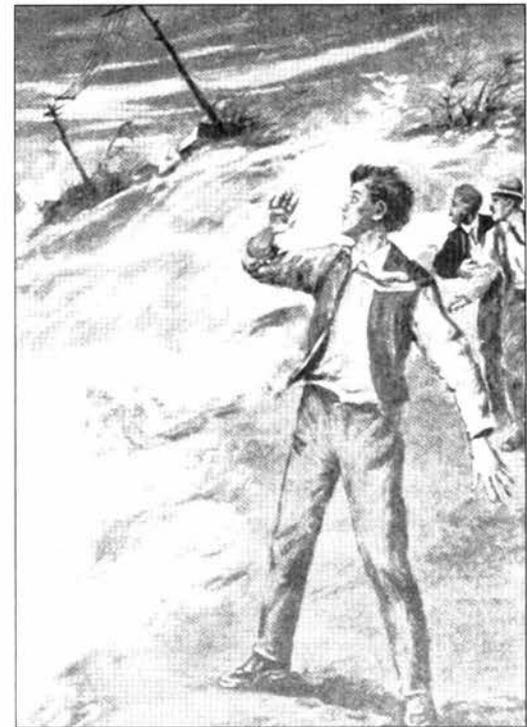
**"LOOK! LOOK!" EXCLAIMED TOM. "DOESN'T
THAT SEEM SUSPICIOUS?"**

Tom Swift and his Air Scout, Page 205



**IT WAS LIKE THE BLAST
OF A HUNDRED THUNDERBOLTS.**

Tom Swift and his Giant Cannon, Page 205



**TOM, LOOKING TOWARD THE WIRELESS STATION,
SAW NEARLY HALF OF THE ISLAND DISAPPEAR.**

Tom Swift and his Wireless Message, Page 203

The wonderful Tom Swift

(Continued from Page 11)

my shoelace!"

"Come Josephine, in My Flying Machine" was just getting a good tryout on the Albee circuit when Tom Swift put wings on a balloon and thus created "His Airship," the *Red Cloud*.

The boys in the haymow said, "Goll-ee! He's wonderful!" And their parents sniffed and said "Ridiculous! Such trash!"

But some of those parents still live — and read about the successes of the Navy's blimps in their hunt for the bandits of the sea — the blimps that have fins and rudders and motors and propellers, just like the *Red Cloud*.

Ah! But the *Red Cloud* had another refinement. Its gas "bag" was no flimsy silk. It was aluminum! In 1910, at that. Remember? It was several years after World War I before Henry Ford demonstrated the practical utility of the all-metal airplane. Then came the all-metal ZMC-2 and the *City of Glendale*, all-metal dirigibles.

Tom's adventures in the *Red Cloud*, harried as they were by Andy Foger and Happy Harry's gang of bank robbers ended — as you might suspect — in triumph for the young inventor.

Falsely accused by that sneak, Andy, he led the sheriff to the lair of the real bank robbers — the first time a sheriff had ever staged a bandit hunt by air. Needless to say, the feat has been often repeated since in real life.

It was a "valuable government prize" that turned young Tom's inventive mind to the depths of the sea — and a means to traverse it. *Tom Swift and His Submarine Boat* performed miracles of undersea navigation — miracles that Victor Appleton explained to the complete satisfaction of boyhood's exacting imagination.

And as nothing is impossible to the willing reader, the mechanics of Tom's undersea boat were explained very simply.

It was Tom's father, the "aged inventor," whose genius provided the novel means of propelling the craft. He did not want to "depend on the usual screw propellers ... nor did he want to use a jet of compressed air, shooting it out from a rear tube, nor yet a jet of water, by means of which the creature called the squid shoots himself along," explained the author.

"Mr. Swift planned to send the *Advance* along under water by means of electricity." (As what submarine builder doesn't today?)

But the Swift "patent idea" was revolutionary!

"Certain peculiar plates were built at the forward and aft blunt noses of the submarine," the description continues. "Into the forward plate a negative charge

of electricity was sent, and into the one at the rear a positive charge, just as one end of a horseshoe magnet is positive and will repel a compass needle, while the other pole of a magnet is negative and will attract it. In electricity like repels like, while negative and positive have a mutual attraction for each other."

Mr. Swift "figured" that the negative electricity in the forward plate would pull the boat along (for "water is a good conductor of electricity"), while the positive charge sent to the rear plate would push it.

Well — it worked!

You can ask any of us who read the book thirty years ago. It took Tom Swift on one of the most wonderful adventures of all.

The race for \$300,000 in gold in a sunken treasure trip tried his and the submarine's mettle. But he triumphed over "Mr. Berg," representative of another "powerful syndicate." Mr. Berg, too, had built a submarine to try for the "government prize" of \$50,000. Mr. Berg, too, had learned through his wily ways that there had been a treasure ship sunk "off the coast of Uruguay."

It gave Tom a chance to try out the electric cannon mounted at the bows. And the chance, too, of trying out an ingenious ramming device, used to break open the gold-filled hull of the treasure ship.

Modern submarines don't ram other ships very often — but such occurrences have been reported. And there are several powerful "cannon" built into the bows and sterns of today's undersea ships — even if they are operated by compressed air.

I often wonder if William Beebe's bathysphere was not inspired by a spark of memory planted by Tom and his deep-sea adventures.

Beebe, if you recall, holds the record for the deepest descent ever made by man. His spherical metal chamber was lowered 3,000 feet into the depths of the sea where he observed strange, luminous creatures never before seen by man. Nor was his adventure as comfortable a one as Tom Swift's, reported thuswise by the author:

"They could hardly realize it, but the depth gauge told the story. It registered a distance below the surface of the ocean of five thousand seven hundred feet — a little over a mile."

Tom, excited, wanted to get into a diving suit and "walk about on land under water for a change."

But that was nothing! When the wreck was ultimately located — under two-and-a-half miles of water — Tom, in a diving suit, fought off a covey of "deepwater sharks" attacking his adventurous companion, Captain Weston.

The amazing thing about the wonderful young inventor's wonderful inventions is their habit of coming true — a quality due entirely to the perspicacity of

(Continued on Page 14)

The wonderful Tom Swift

(Continued from Page 13)

Tom's creator.

Of course, Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* was prophetic. A score of works years ago cast detailed shadows of present-day events. But no one man in the realm of fantastic fiction has been so consistently — and so prolifically — right in anticipating the mechanical wonders of today.

In our youth, he was a shadowy figure. If we thought about Victor Appleton at all we thought of him as a name at the bottom of an oval on the cover in which was imprinted *Tom Swift Among the Diamond Makers*, or *Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle*.

Actually, "Victor Appleton" was the late Edward Stratemeyer, the greatest producer of juvenile fiction in the world. He was born in Elizabeth, N. J., October 4, 1862, and died May 10, 1930 after having been responsible for the largest book sale on record. His "works" are still selling and new ones are appearing in 25- and 10-cent editions under the direction of his two daughters, Miss Edna C. Stratemeyer and Mrs. Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, who maintain the offices of the Stratemeyer Syndicate in East Orange, N. J.

He lived in the proper age for his work. The world, and particularly America, was just awakening and rubbing its eyes in realization of the vast new world that science and invention were offering.

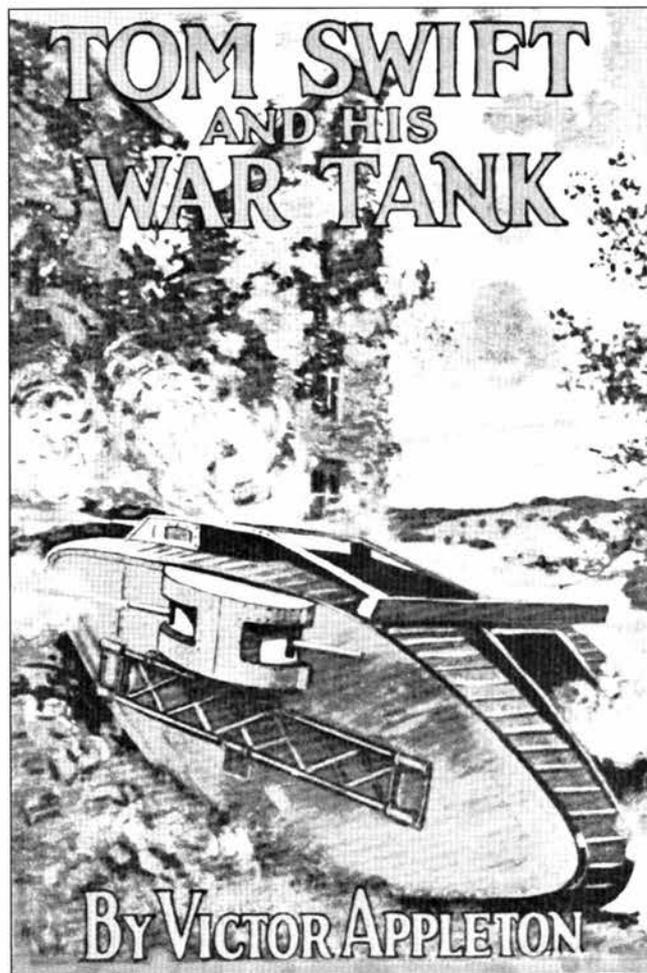
The Model T's were appearing in increasing numbers; the motorcycle was a machine of adventure and daring; steel-clad ships were the pride of the Navy and the first airplane had been launched from an improvised platform on a cruiser. Distances were shortening and the promise of *speed*, evidenced in the occasional exhibition flights of the bamboo-and-silk kites built by young Glenn Curtiss, had fired the imagination of America's youth.

Is it any wonder that Stratemeyer named him Tom Swift? He couldn't possibly lose with such a typically short, American name. That baptism is evidence of the shrewd, simple genius of the author in his depiction of a real United States youth of the first quarter of the 20th century.

When newspaper reporters were writing over our heads "interpreting" events of the day and were granted a half column of adjectives to go along with a half column of news, Victor Appleton was giving us those events in a pill coated with excitement.

Before the Atlantic joined the Pacific in the Big Ditch cut through Panama, Edward Stratemeyer set Tom Swift to work devising fantastic defenses for the canal.

Tom Swift and His Giant Cannon hurled a two-ton

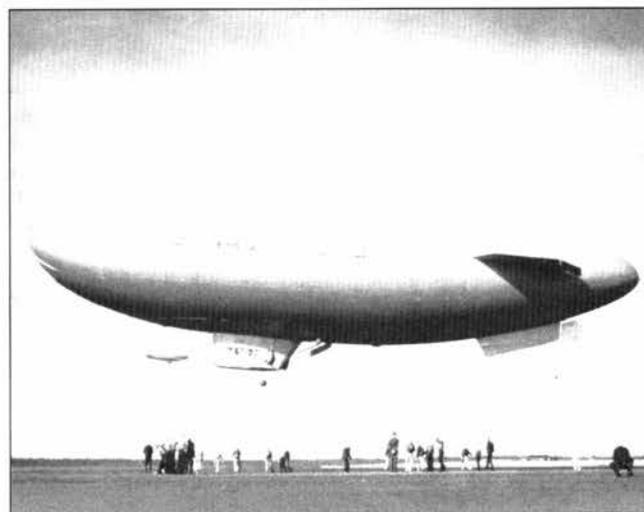


Thirty-four years ago, who'd have thought Tom Swift's War Tank was even vaguely possible? The kids who read about it then thought so. Today, Tom Swift's War Tank is real, and the kids have grown up to build them and drive them. *Editor's note: This Army M3 series Stuart tank was used in the early days of World War II.* Official U.S. Army photo





Tom Swift's aluminum-covered *Red Cloud* (1910), which served him well in several adventures, pioneered the blimps of fiction and the real world. Today, blimps (non-rigid airships) operated by the U.S. Navy, below, are used to search for German U-Boats lurking off the East Coast, among other military operations. Official U.S. Navy photo



projectile 33 miles. "The longest shot on record," cried the man. "Thirty-three miles and it struck, exploded and blew the top off a mountain on an island out there!"

It was Tom Swift who gave us our first knowledge of nitroglycerine and guncotton when, in "inventing" a charge for his super-cannon, he hit upon a "terrifically powerful explosive."

Here's the description of the "longest shot on record" that held us spellbound and filled us with pride in knowing Tom Swift had done it again:

"Coincident with the pressure of Tom's fingers there seemed to be a veritable earthquake. The ground swayed and rocked, and a number of the spectators staggered back. It was like the blast of a hundred thunderbolts. The gun shook as it recoiled from the shock, but the wonderful disappearing carriage, fitted with coiled, pneumatic and hydrostatic buffers, stood the strain."

And Tom, for that longest shot, not only got his gun "accepted" by the government, but was rewarded otherwise. The longest shot on record had blasted the top off an island mountain revealing the shaft of a "lost opal mine." The very mine, mind you, being sought by a man whose expedition had been financed by the Swifts.

Well, it was no more than Tom deserved.

Today, if in his modern adventures Tom ever gets to the Canal Zone, or out on Sandy Hook — or on any U. S. defenses — he should be justly proud of the job his Giant Cannons are doing with the Army and the Navy, the Marines and the Coast Artillery.

World War I beat Tom to the punch on land battleships. It wasn't until 1918 that *Tom Swift and His War Tank* thrilled the youths that were later to watch the lumbering steel giants in newsreels from France.

But you couldn't get ahead of Tom. He had a new twist.

He saved his tank from destruction at the hands of "German plotters" by exercising "wireless control" over the machine with signals from his swift flying airplane.

Perhaps one passage from this volume will revive a picture you have seen in the last few months:

Tom was testing his tank and a ruined factory building was the test. He aimed it at the largest of the remaining walls.

"There was a crash as the blunt nose of the great war tank hit the wall and crumpled it up.

"A great hole was made in the masonry and what was not crushed under the caterpillar belts of the tank fell in a shower of bricks, stone and cement on top of the machine.

"Like a great hail storm, broken masonry pelted the steel sides and top of the tank. But she felt it no more than does an alligator the attacks of a colony of ants ..."

The wireless control angle was new with Tom, but the armies of the United Nations and the Axis powers

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The wonderful Tom Swift

(Continued from Page 15)

as well are using it now in their titanic tank battles all over the world — in a modified form, of course.

The Stratemeyers are proud of their father's ability to take the seed of scientific knowledge and make it grow into a pattern of things to come.

There is evidence of this ability in virtually every title of the Tom Swift series.

Tom Swift's "Sky Racer" was a pattern for the super-speed planes of today's war; his "Great Search Light," the blazing finger of which probed the lair of a swindling ring, is cast today as the spotter of night raiders in all parts of the world.

His "Wireless Message" was radio prophecy and his "Photo Telephone" today flashes pictures to your newspapers across continents. His "Electric Rifle" as yet has found no practical existence, but "Among the Diamond Makers" he unearthed a formula that is in use today in the production of carbon crystals.

Tom Swift even gave us television — for a practical demonstration of which you can go to your nearest radio dealer — or could up until a few weeks ago.

During one period of Tom Swift's adventurous life, certain people dealt harshly with him and with Mr. Stratemeyer's books.

Apparently it was not so much Tom's inventions they objected to, but, rather, the things that these inventions led him into that brought the jaundiced looks. There was talk of "unreality" and the "effect on young, impressionable minds." Well, maybe so.

When the Nazis took Crete, was there anything about the attack that reminded you of Tom Swift?

They used one of his inventions.

Ten years before the strategic Mediterranean island fell, *Tom Swift and His Sky Train* (1931) blazed a trail from coast to coast carrying passengers in four gliders attached to the tail of the *Eagle*, Tom's big airliner.

Of course there was the usual "prize" at the end of the trail. There were the machinations of rival aircraft manufacturers and Tom's "wonderful" duo magnetic couplings that kept the gliders hitched to the mother ship.

At Chicago and Denver and San Francisco Tom cut loose gliders to soar gracefully to a perfect landing.

You all know the story of Crete and how troop-laden gliders cut loose from transport ships to land on the little island, spewing death for the defenders.

Ah, but the Nazis haven't caught up with Tom yet. Tom's Sky Train had another angle. Not only could he cut loose his gliders, but he could *pick up* new gliders lifted to him by ground-based ships as he sped at



THE LAST GLIDER PLUNGED DOWN INTO LAKE CARLOPA WITH A MIGHTY SPLASH!

Tom Swift and his Sky Train, Page 143

Towed gliders were used by Nazi Germany from early in World War II, with the Allies later catching up to Tom Swift's 1931 Sky Train technology. Editor's note: The Allies utilized gliders during the Normandy D-Day assault to carry troops and supplies past the invasion beaches.

unslackened speed over each airport — thanks to the magnetic couplers.

Let 'em try to match *that*.

Tom Swift and his adventures may have been bad for "impressionable, young minds." Maybe so. But I wonder to what degree he might also be responsible for the American kind of imagination and ingenuity — the kind of imagination and ingenuity that bombs Tokyo four months after we are plunged into war without warning.

Anyway, we all used to think Tom Swift was wonderful! So did his sweetheart, Mary Nestor. And now, as Mrs. Tom Swift, she probably has plenty of trouble — getting Tom to come out of his workshop long enough to eat his dinner.