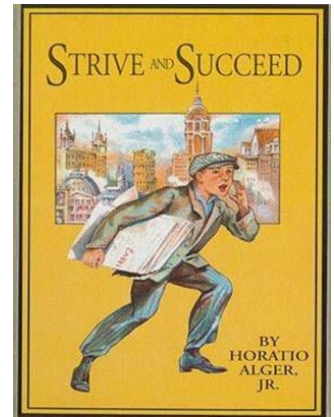




THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY

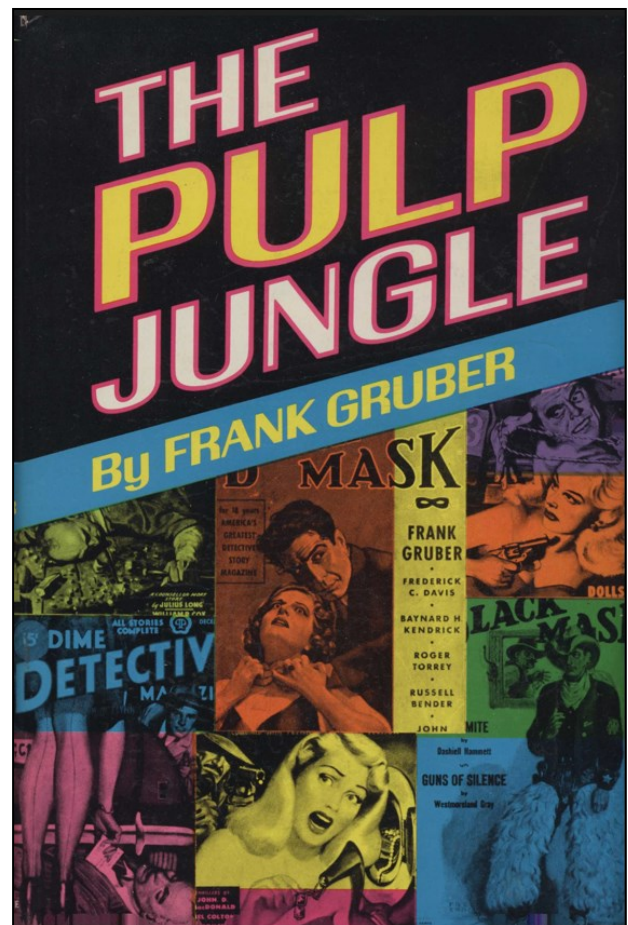
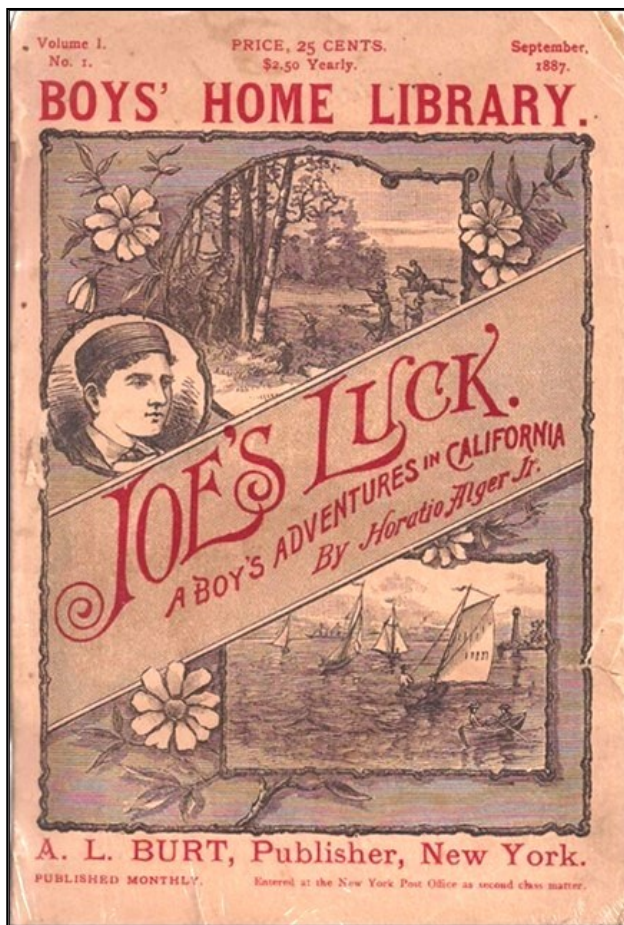
A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America



Volume LXII

November-December 2024

Number 6



In this issue of *Newsboy*, Scott Chase (PF-1106), winner of the Horatio Alger Society's 2024 Newsboy award for his scholarly articles on the author's books, provides the first of three articles about publisher A. L. Burt's hardcover editions in *The Boys' Home Series*. In addition, Jack Bales (PF-258) offers an illustrated profile of Alger biographer-bibliographer Frank Gruber. Images show the paperback edition of Alger's *Joe's Luck* and the dust jacket of Gruber's memoir of his struggling early years writing for pulp magazines (Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1967).

President's Column

Jack Bales and I were talking about an interesting topic: how does Artificial Intelligence do with Horatio Alger? Jack had run a ChatGPT search, and I decided to task a research assistant, a computer science student, with a more extensive investigation.

A large language model (LLM) is a form of machine learning using deep learning. LLMs use algorithms to find patterns in huge data sets. In their training, they ingest massive amounts of electronic text, most of it from internet content, including web sites and social media. Machines learn to respond to user requests in natural language. Materials that are not available in electronic form are underrepresented, and some copyright holders (current *New York Times* lawsuit) seek to block AI consumption of their product.

The results of an AI search will be only as good as the electronic data an LLM consumes as it learns. I assume you have found instances where the internet makes mistakes, and mistakes are reproduced in additional sources; AI will tend to incorporate these errors. Cultural biases in electronic material will be reflected. As the authors of a 2016 paper on neural information processing systems wrote, "The blind application of machine learning runs the risk of amplifying biases present in the data." It can even be worse. We call "hallucination" a result when AI creates outputs that are nonsensical or completely inaccurate.

I asked the student to run prompts through several LLMs currently available to us: Meta AI, ChatGPT (from Open AI), and Gemini (from Google DeepMind). I asked him to look not only for Alger but to also see whether and how Alger is mentioned when searching for "American dream of success," "Success Literature Horatio Alger," "Horatio Alger Story," "Horatio Alger Hero," "rags to riches," and "pulling oneself up by the bootstraps" (this final search was not useful).

Gemini and ChatGPT appeared to offer somewhat more extensive and substantive treatments of "Horatio Alger" (and "Success Literature Horatio Alger"). When asking about "Horatio Alger," Meta summarized his literary contributions and mentioned some of his books. ChatGPT and Gemini did this and talked about his influence on literature, and on the notion of the 'American Dream.' In the simple "Horatio Alger" search, Gemini offered that "Horatio Alger hero" has become synonymous with someone who overcomes adversity to achieve success through hard work and

(Continued on page 20)

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr. (1832-1899) and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes. Our members conduct research and provide scholarship on the life of Alger, his works, and his influence on the culture of America. The Horatio Alger Society embraces collectors and enthusiasts of all juvenile literature, including boys' and girls' series books, pulps, and dime novels.

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Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is \$25 (\$20 for seniors), with single issues of *Newsboy* \$4.00. Please make remittance payable in U.S. funds to the Horatio Alger Society, 4940 Old Main St., Unit 206, Henrico, VA 23231.

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

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. For additional information on the Horatio Alger Society, including a biography of Alger and details on his works, see the Society's website at <https://horatioalgersociety.net>.

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In Search of Horatio Alger!

By Ralph D. Gardner

(Second of Two Parts)

Editor's note: The first part of Ralph D. Gardner's "In Search of Horatio Alger!" was published in the September-October issue of Newsboy. I am pleased that The Manuscript Society has granted me permission to reprint his fine article, originally published in Manuscripts, Volume XXXIX, #2, Spring 1987. Robert E. Kasper mentioned Ralph's Manuscripts article in his "Letters from Horatio—Part 5," published in the March-April 2024 Newsboy, and I appreciate that he sent me a copy of the entire issue, from which these two transcripts were taken.



Some of Alger's earliest existing manuscripts, written as class projects at Harvard, are at the University's Houghton Library. In 1850 he produced a paper titled *Disquisition on the Immortality of Boot Soles* and a Greek version of Lacey's *Address in Behalf of the Greeks*. The following year he wrote *The Poetry of the Troubadours* and won first prize for his Bowdoin dissertation, *Athens in the Time of Socrates* (submitted under the pen name Athenaceus, but he later wrote his own name on the cover), and another Bowdoin entry in Greek, *The State of Athens Before the Legislation of Solon* (which he signed "By Zeta, a Member of the Junior Class). In his senior year, 1852, he wrote an English oration on *Cicero's Return from Banishment*.

Those seeking Horatio Alger manuscript material will fare best pursuing letters he wrote to publishers, friends, other authors and replies to correspondence from adoring readers.

The most extensive group is at the Henry E. Huntington Library. Most of these are addressed to Irving Blake, a young journalist for whom Alger obtained a job at the *New York Tribune*. They include several dozen sometimes rambling letters written over a five-year period, starting April 7, 1894, when Blake was sixteen years old. Here are some random observations and reports of activities extracted from letters of various dates:

"I have twice attended the Boston theatre, delivered a poem before the Women's Suffrage League and went to two entertainments in Natick . . . On Monday night, in Waltham, I gave a talk interspersed with readings from *Ragged Dick* . . . Among the audience were about 100 boys. One met me on the street the next day and said, 'Yer done good last evenin'. When are you going to lecture again?' What gratifies me most is that boys, though strangers, seem to re-

gard me as a personal friend.

"A new game called *Authors* will be issued by the U.S. Playing Card Company, in Cincinnati, in the fall. I am in it. I have sent them my photograph, which will appear . . . A boy writes me from a Georgia college that they have my books in the library.

"It was cold here this morning, only eighteen degrees at seven o'clock. However, we keep the house warm and comfortable . . . The country is still pleasant. Looking out of the window I see on the lot adjoining a hundred oak and walnut trees. The leaves are beginning to change color. Every day a few children appear whom we allow to pick up the nuts that have fallen . . . Already the flavor of the Thanksgiving turkey can be scented from the near distance. We make more of the festival in New England than in New York.

"I received a letter from [John Townsend] Trowbridge a day or two since. He reports himself well and happy, though in his seventy-first year . . . [also one] from Edward S. Ellis, who seems to be hard at work as usual . . . He is working on his history and does considerable besides. I should think this would eventually break him down, but he is very strong and robust and not at all nervous . . . I envy Ellis his ability to work. My brain is very sluggish at present.

"In the November issue of *McClure's* there is an article by Mark Twain, but it is not up to his *Innocents Abroad*. We don't improve as we grow older . . . I hear that Edward Bok, of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, has overworked, and is feeling the effects. He is only thirty-three. I wish you may be as successful.

"Have you seen Louisa May Alcott's letter in *Ladies' Home Journal*? Her ideas about the hereafter were original and peculiar. She seems to believe in a series of existences (on earth, probably), and had an idea that she lived before. What a pity she died so soon! She had no competition as a writer for girls. There are plenty of good writers for boys. If there were not, I would occupy a larger field and have more abundant sales.

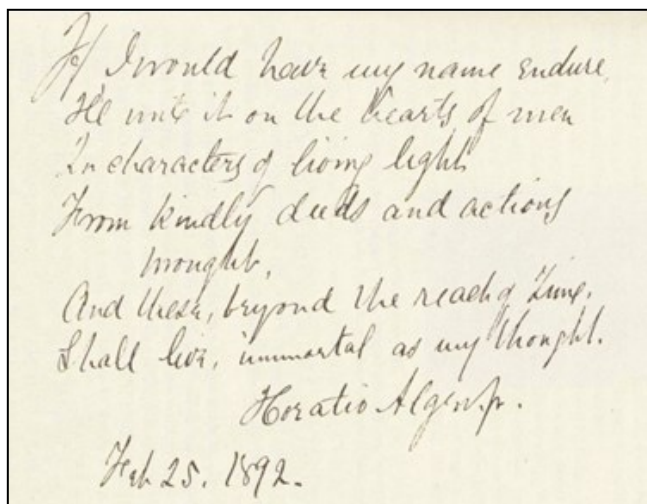
"I am glad you liked the *Argosy* story. I took special pains with it, so that I hope to leave a good impression on the readers, should that be my last.

"I wonder, Irving, how it would seem to be as young and full of life and enthusiasm as you are. I wouldn't dare to go back to 19 again, lest my share of success should prove to be less than it has been. But you will have a chance to see a strange new world with many wonderful inventions and discoveries. If I would come back 50 years from now probably I

should feel bewildered in reading the *New York Tribune* of 1947 edited by Irving E. Blake, L.L.D. But in another world I may have learned things still more wonderful.”

Over the decades of his incredible popularity, Alger autographed great numbers of books and some of these still exist. Besides the usual presentations, he had two favorite rhymes that he inscribed. Interestingly, he altered both over the years. One of these was:

If I would have my name endure,
I'll write it in the hearts of men
In characters of living light.
Of kindly deeds and actions wrought,
And these, beyond the reach of time,
Shall live, immortal as my thought.



Horatio Alger Inscription, 1892

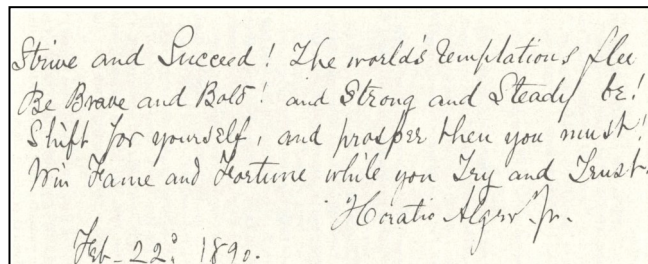
Horatio Alger often used as an inscription this final stanza of his once popular poem, “Carving a Name.”

This was the last stanza of his often reprinted poem, “Carving a Name.” It appeared in numerous periodicals, school readers and home entertainment reciters. In 1875 he included it in *Grand’ther Baldwin’s Thanksgiving*, a collection of thirty-two poems and ballads.⁹ Several of these were regularly performed at oratory competitions.

I have in my collection an early manuscript draft of this poem; it contains one stanza less than the published version. In its final stanza “Of kindly deeds” appears as “Of kindly words” (and it has also been noted as “From kindly deeds”). The phrase, “beyond the reach of time” he originally wrote as “beyond the touch of time.”

The second was composed of titles of six of his books:

Strive and Succeed! The world’s temptations flee;
Be *Brave and Bold!* and *Strong and Steady* be!
Shift for Yourself, and prosper then you must!
Win *Fame and Fortune* while you *Try and Trust!*



Horatio Alger Inscription, 1890

This 1890 Horatio Alger inscription is composed of the titles of six of his best-known books.

Alger later changed *Shift for Yourself*—it was at variance with the actual title, *Shifting for Himself*—to another title, the new line starting *Go Slow and Sure*.

Anticipating that some readers may recall a 1928 biography, supposedly based upon Alger’s diaries, let me point out that those diaries never existed and the narrative, itself, was acknowledged by its author to have been a hoax.¹⁰

During the early 1960s, organizing material for my own book, I made great efforts to contact anyone still alive who had known Alger. I was able to locate three men who provided accurate, vivid descriptions of his physical appearance, personality and working habits. These included Henry Ralston, a former Street & Smith executive who was the publisher’s office boy when Alger frequently called at Ormond Smith’s office in the 1890s; New York Governor and United States Senator Herbert H. Lehman and Lehman’s friend, the Hon. Lewis Einstein, a retired diplomat who was then living in Paris. Alger had been a tutor to Einstein and his sister about 1888, and Lehman frequently joined the three of them on walks or visited Einstein’s home when Alger was present.¹¹

There was a fourth person who could have helped and, although I saw him almost every day for many months, I was unaware of his Alger connection until I read these lines in the letter to Irving Blake dated December 3, 1896:

“A few days since I had an hour’s talk with one of the leading editors of the *Philadelphia Press*. He is a

man of about 30 and a native of Natick. He was here on a week's vacation. His name is Wilson Fairbanks."

In 1942, when I was a copy boy starting my own career as a newspaperman at the *New York Times*, Mr. Fairbanks—*nobody* called him Wilson—was the chief editor on the national news copy desk. Based upon Alger's estimate of his age in 1896, he was seventy-six in 1942. Fairbanks was tall, gaunt with a walrus mustache and a shock of white hair that he constantly pushed back from his forehead.

He was an irascible old gentleman, as impatient with his sub-editors as he was with copy boys. During our nightly lull, waiting for the first edition to come off the presses, he sat alone—with legs crossed and an arm draped over the back of his chair—glaring balefully out over the vast *Times* newsroom. Had I known then what my research disclosed twenty years later, I might have approached him—albeit timidly—and might have said, "Mr. Fairbanks. Tell me about Horatio Alger!"

Notes

⁹ *Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving* (Boston: A. K. Loring, 1875) appears to have been issued in a single, small edition. Most copies examined carry an Alger inscription, either personalized or "With the compliments of the author."

¹⁰ Herbert R. Mayes, *Alger: A Biography Without a Hero* (New York: Macy-Masius, 1928). For many years researchers doubted the existence of these diaries, upon which the Mayes version was based. Mayes set the record straight in a letter dated July 3, 1972, to Bill Henderson who was then Associate Editor, Doubleday & Company. "Not merely was my Alger biography partly fictional, it was practically all frictional," he wrote, adding that "the project was undertaken with malice aforethought—a takeoff on the debunking biographies that were quite popular in the 20s." My own copy of his book he autographed: "For Ralph Gardner, with good wishes, from the perpetrator of the hoax. Herb Mayes." See Horatio Alger Jr., *Silas Snobden's Office Boy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1973), "Foreword: A New Book by Horatio Alger!" by Ralph D. Gardner, p. 6 and footnote 3, p. 25.

¹¹ *Horatio Alger; or, The American Hero Era*, op. cit., pp. 200, 204, 227, 258 et passim. Alger had been a teacher and even after becoming a successful author he tutored children of prominent New York families. During 1883–1884 he prepared future United States Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo for entrance exams to Columbia University. As Cardozo was only fifteen when he passed with a near-perfect score, he was required to wait another year before entering. Pp. 271–275.

Editor's Notebook

I recently came across the below Horatio Alger, Jr. poem, a work that is not listed—at least not under this title—in Bob Bennett's *A Collector's Guide to the Published Works of Horatio Alger, Jr.* It is from the June 17, 1865, issue of the Weaverville, California *Weekly Trinity Journal*, "a family newspaper, independent in politics, and devoted to the advancement of home interests." I also uncovered what I believe are new articles on Alger based on interviews with him that I will reprint in *Newsboy* at some point.

Thanksgiving.

God be thanked! the first grey dawning
Of the morning lights the sky;
We shall see the full, bright sunshine,
By and bye.

And the Upas tree that cumbered,
While we slumbered, our fair land,
It is doomed: for lo! the axe is
In God's hand.

Soon our soldiers home returning,
To the yearning hearts that wait,
We will meet with joyful footsteps,
At the gate.

Raise to God the loud hosanna,
For our banner proudly waves
O'er a land redeemed, enfranchised,
Without slaves.

—Horatio Alger, Jr.

James Keeline (PF-898) emailed that he recently went to the Nancy Drew Sleuths convention in Sleepy Hollow, New York. He gave a brief presentation about a 1909 incident in Edward Stratemeyer's life that could have proved tragic. He also did some research at the New York Public Library—which seems fitting, of course. James's Popular Culture Association presentation (in New Orleans in April) is on Stratemeyer's little-known "potboiler" romance stories for adult women readers. "These are melodramatic, to say the least," James told me, "but that is how the editors and readers wanted them." Incidentally, I am finally getting the hang of my new editing position, and I'd like to thank James for sending me much of Bill Gowen's material—including the handsome newsboy statue that I pictured in the last *Newsboy*.

President Carol Nackenoff (PF-921) recently told me, for the benefit of everyone in the Society, "We expect to have more news about the 2025 convention at Northern Illinois University in our next issue, so please stay tuned and start packing your bags!"

**“To Write Books Like Those of Horatio Alger, Jr”:
Frank Gruber**

By Jack Bales (PF-258)

“The Alger books influenced me more than anything else in my life. . . . They instilled in me an ambition that I have had from the age of nine or ten . . . The books inspired me to become a writer, to write books like those of Horatio Alger, Jr.”

—Frank Gruber, *The Pulp Jungle*, 1967

“Frank Gruber, of West Los Angeles, Calif., who introduced me to the supremely rare original Alger paperbacks.”

—Ralph D. Gardner, acknowledgments in *Horatio Alger, or, The American Hero Era* (1964)



Before Ralph D. Gardner arrived on the Horatio Alger collecting scene with his 1964 biography-bibliography, *Horatio Alger; or, The American Hero Era*, there was Frank Gruber and his own painstaking research. Compiler of the first authoritative Alger checklist (“The Books of Horatio Alger, Jr.,” *Antiquarian Bookman*, November 13, 1948), Gruber updated and expanded it for his 1961 book, *Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Biography and Bibliography*.

How did Gruber, a veteran writer of mysteries, westerns, stories, and film and television scripts, get interested in the works of Alger? He read his first book when he was nine years old, which happened to be a paperback copy of the author’s *Luke Walton, The Chicago Newsboy*. “The Alger books influenced me more than anything else in my life,” he wrote in his memoir of his early years, *The Pulp Jungle*. “They settled the problem of my future. . . . The books inspired me to become a writer, to write books like those of Horatio Alger, Jr.” (*TPJ*, 6-7)

Years of Struggle

Gruber did indeed eventually make it as a writer, but it took him quite a while to get there. He was born on February 2, 1904, in Elmer, Minnesota, the son of Joseph and Susanna (Reisinger) Gruber. As a young teenager growing up in Chicago, he wrote and submitted stories to many magazines, which summarily rejected them without comment. Finally, in February 1927, the United Brethren Publishing House of Dayton, Ohio, accepted his story, “The Two Dollar Raise.” Its publication led to his becoming the editor of a small farm paper, a position he kept until September when he accepted a higher-paying editorial position in Iowa, where he lived for the next four

years (“Frank Gruber,” *Gale Literature: Contemporary Authors*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com>. See also “Frank Gruber,” *Ancestry Library Edition*, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com>; *TPJ*, 7-11).

Gruber was able to weather the first part of the Great Depression, and he married Lois Mahood in 1931 (they had one child, Robert James, born in 1940). From August 1932 through June 1934, he wrote 174 what he called “pieces,” which included detective stories, sports stories, love stories, and even “spicy sex stories.” He said that “everything was grist, every avenue of publication was explored. Every type of writing that offered a buck was attempted. Nothing was too low, nothing too cheap.” He wrote many articles (“Lord, I wrote articles!”) for a variety of magazines, including such titles as “How to Eradicate Worms in Poultry” for the *American Poultry Journal*. And all on what he called a “much-abused” Remington portable typewriter.

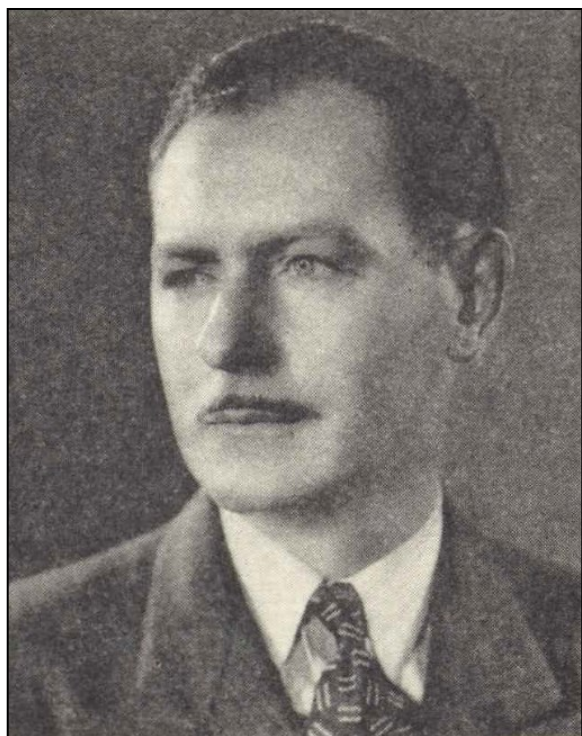
He managed to sell 107 of these 174 works, and although that was a fairly good percentage, he was paid only \$205.00, an average of about a quarter of one cent per word. In July 1934 he gave up what he called a “life of toil” and moved to New York to try his luck there on becoming a writer. (*Gale Literature; Ancestry Library Edition; TPJ*, 12-17)

It was the era of pulp magazines—inexpensive fiction magazines so named because they were printed on rough, cheap, wood-pulp paper—and some 150 of them were flourishing, including *Doc Savage*, *Black Mask*, *Detective Story*, *The Shadow*, *Western Story*, *Love Story*, *Sport Story*, *Wild West Weekly*, *Argosy*, *Munsey’s Magazine*, and *Detective Fiction Weekly*. It was “a vast market for stories,” Gruber said. “But these were still Depression Days and the competition was fierce. It was a literary jungle and every writer was a tiger.” (*TPJ*, 20; *BK*, 10)

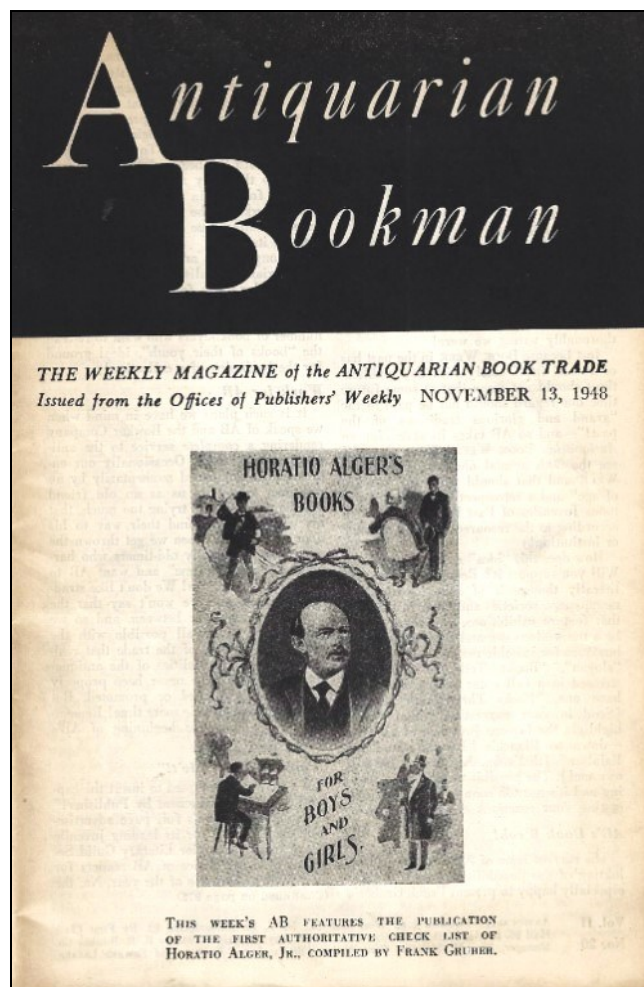
As Erle Stanley Gardner, author of the Perry Mason legal detective novels put it, Gruber “licked his weight in rejection slips.” Editors did not like his adventure, detective, or love stories, but finally one editor suggested he try a Western tale. He wrote “Treasure Trap” and “Six Shooters at Sundown,” as well as a spy story, “Murder Maneuvers,” all of which sold. “This was the 14th of December, 1934,” he said. “I was ‘in.’” (*TPJ*, dust jacket; *BK*, 17-20)

Recognition

In 1934, Gruber’s income from writing was just \$400. In 1935, he earned more than \$10,000. “I wrote Western stories, spy stories, adventure stories and



Left: Frank Gruber, from the 1941 edition of *Current Biography* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1941). Right: The cover of the November 13, 1948, *Antiquarian Bookman*. The caption, below the frontispiece often appearing in Winston Algers, reads: "This week's AB features the publication of the first authoritative check list of Horatio Alger, Jr., compiled by Frank Gruber." (Photograph courtesy of Robert E. Kasper)



even some sport stories," he said. In 1936, he decided to try writing what he called a "series character," and he came up with Oliver Quade, the "Human Encyclopedia," a man so named because with his "greatest brain in the entire country" he could answer any question. The story was "Brass Knuckles"—his best one yet, according to editors—and he followed it with 14 others featuring the detective whose photographic memory helped him solve crimes. Gruber collected ten stories featuring Oliver Quade and partner Charles Boston into the 1966 volume, *Brass Knuckles: The Oliver Quade, Human Encyclopedia Stories*. (BK, 20, 52; TTD)

By the late 1930s, author Frank Gruber wanted to leave pulp magazines for greener, more lucrative pastures. "I had become a novelette writer in the pulps," he said, "and my thoughts ran more along the lines of longer, more complex stories." He had written some Western novelettes, and typed *Peace Marshal* in just three weeks, which was published by

William Morrow in 1939. Gruber went back to crime fiction with his *The French Key*, published by the firm Farrar and Rinehart in 1940 and featuring detectives Johnny Fletcher and Sammy Cragg. Between 1940 and 1964 he would write 13 more Fletcher and Craig novels. Gruber's other popular detectives—who seemed to always work in pairs—included Otis Beagle and Joe Peel (three books), and Simon Lash and Eddie Slocum (three books). In the early 1940s, Gruber told an interviewer that he read 250 murder mysteries a year and wrote some 600,000 words of crime fiction, which he incorporated into six or seven books and numerous magazine pieces. (BK, 33-38; TPJ, front endpaper, 152-53; TTD; "Frank Gruber, 65, Wrote Westerns," *New York Times*, December 11, 1969, 55)

It wasn't all work, however. Gruber enjoyed collecting western Americana, which led to his writing numerous westerns. The popularity of these novels was in large part due to his knowledge of the period

and his incorporating of historical western lore into his works. “I try to establish some basis in history as part of my story,” Gruber said, “and I create a Western mood.” (“Frank Gruber, 65, Wrote Westerns”)

Peace Marshal went through various editions, was translated into numerous languages, sold more than one million copies, and was made into a motion picture titled *The Kansan* (1943). Gruber commented in *The Pulp Jungle* that all of his books sold more than 90 million copies and that 25 of his books were purchased by filmmakers. The website *The Thrilling Detective* states that Gruber’s output includes 400 short stories and novellas for more than 40 pulp magazines, more than 50 novels, and over 150 screenplays and television scripts (he adapted his own work for movies and wrote original scripts for both films and television). He also wrote the non-fiction *Zane Grey: A Biography* (1969) and created three television series: *The Texan*, *Tales of Wells Fargo*, and *Shotgun Slade*. Besides using his own byline, he also published works under pseudonyms, including Stephen Acre, John K. Vedder, and Charles K. Boston (Charles Boston was the name of Oliver Quade’s partner in Gruber’s stories). Incidentally, H.A.S. member Robert E. Kasper (PF-327) told me that Gruber used to advertise for Alger books in *Dime Novel Round-Up* under his Boston pen name, though “everybody knew who it was.” (*HAI*, 10; *TPJ*, 152, 188-189; *TTD*)

Horatio Alger, Jr.

With the era of the pulps fading in the mid-twentieth century, Gruber increasingly turned his attention to both motion pictures and the fledgling television industry. The work was often stressful, and to relieve the tension, he devoted his spare time to his hobby of collecting western Americana. One day, purely by chance, he picked up a first edition of a Horatio Alger book, which got him hooked on another collecting interest and diversion. (*TTD*; *HAI*, 10.)

Gruber enjoyed his new avocation a great deal; in fact, a first edition of *Ralph Raymond’s Heir*—one of the most difficult Alger titles for Gruber himself to find—is the focus of his *Murder ’97* (1948). Private detective Simon Lash is hired to locate the original owner of the book, and as a *New York Times* reviewer wrote, “What [Lash] does not suspect is that murder is going to be done because of a secret to which the Alger book is a clue.” (“Reports on Criminals at Large,” *New York Times*, February 1, 1948)



A press photograph of Frank Gruber upon the release of the film *Town Tamer* (1965), based on his 1958 western of the same name. The motion picture starred Dana Andrews, Terry Moore, and Pat O’Brien.

In 1947, Gruber saw an advertisement in the magazine *Dime Novel-Round-Up* placed by another Alger enthusiast. The collector was Stanley A. Pachon (1910-1988) of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who would years later become a well-respected and knowledgeable member of the Horatio Alger Society. Gruber wrote Pachon that “Alger has for years been a hobby of mine and about three years ago I started seriously collecting him. I’ve spent a great deal of money and time during these three years and I am by no means finished with the job.” (Gruber to Pachon, June 4, 1947.)

At that time Gruber and Morton S. Enslin—profiled in the September-October *Newsboy*—owned probably the two most complete collections of Alger’s books. (Gruber also collected the works of other juvenile authors, including Harry Castlemon, John Townsend Trowbridge, Edward S. Ellis, and William Taylor Adams, aka Oliver Optic.) Rob Kasper has copies of Gruber’s letters to Pachon from 1947 to 1954, and in the course of

their correspondence, the two men discussed the nuances of book collecting, the idiosyncrasies of booksellers, the difficulties of ascertaining true first editions, the volumes in their respective collections, and the titles they were still looking for.

Pachon wanted to obtain every edition of every title, which Gruber thought was a nearly impossible task. "I've been going over your list several times," Gruber wrote, "and each time have mentally shaken my head at what you're trying to do—apparently get down [*sic*] every edition of every Alger book that was ever printed. This just seemed to me too difficult a job." (Gruber to Pachon, undated letter, written in late December 1953 or early 1954).

Gruber, for his part, confined himself to the author's first editions. "In my own collecting I've tried to stick just to Alger books and only first editions. But along the way I've picked up a mass of stuff—autographs, pictures, letters, newspapers, magazines. . . . I have many, many duplicates. I have three Ragged Dicks, the authentic firsts, of which there are only five known copies. I also own the one and only known copy of TIMOTHY CRUMP'S WARD, the genuine first. No other copy has shown up in 20 years—although the N. Y. [Public] Library has the paper edition, which was a reprint of the cloth. But that's the only known one of that edition.* You may find this hard to believe, but I have \$8,000 invested in Alger books alone." (Gruber to Pachon, May 1, 1950)

Despite the thousands of dollars he spent on his Alger collection—and Gruber once grouched to Pachon about a book dealer wanting what he considered a high price of \$40.00 for a first of *Joe's Luck*, which he refused to pay—there were a number of titles that he needed; moreover, both he and Pachon had difficulties deciding which edition was truly the first. "Your Dean Dunham is definitely the first issue, in L[ea]ther-C[la]d," Gruber declared, "but I still haven't satisfied myself on \$500 Check. I was ready to throw in the sponge a couple of times. I'll give it one more whack in a few days." (Gruber to Pachon, December 10, 1953; December 28, 1953)

The title *Dean Dunham* raises an interesting side story. Gruber was working on a bibliography of Alger first editions and did not have that book, nor the Leather-Clad of \$500, and he wanted photographs of both Algers for his bibliography.** "To get right into it," he wrote Pachon in December 1953, "please send me at once, via airmail, your copies of the Leather-Clad editions of \$500 Check and Dean Dunham. I

want to photograph these. I will return these to you promptly, if you so desire. I do, however, want to keep them. . . . I am willing to make you any sort of attractive offer to purchase or trade. If you are willing to sell, I will offer you \$25.00 each, in cash. This is what I had to pay for one of the Leather-Clads I now have. . . . If you don't want the cash, I will give you double their value in trade—in other words, \$100 value for the two." (Gruber to Pachon, December 10, 1953)

Pachon did indeed lend Gruber both prized books, although he refused to let him keep them. *Dean Dunham*, however, arrived at the writer's home with a broken binding. "They are in bad shape," Gruber told Pachon. "I unwrapped them carefully but the spine of DEAN DUNHAM fell off in my hand. There is no back cover at all. I took the liberty of fastening down the spine with Scotch tape. This will not hurt it." (Gruber to Pachon, December 18, 1953)

Book collectors will surely flinch at that last statement, particularly given the fragile soft covers of the exceedingly rare Leather-Clad Tales. (H.A.S. members who own Gruber's *Horatio Alger, Jr.* can readily see the Scotch tape on the spine of *Dean Dunham* in the photograph section of his book.)

Gruber focused his collecting and his bibliographic research just on Alger's books. "Understand, I never went in for the short stories and poems. I had not contemplated making a bibliography of them, because no matter how thorough anyone will do this, I am sure you will miss something. . . . However, in the majority of the cases, I do have the actual stories, either in a bound volume or in the original magazine. I pick up a lot of these along the way, sometimes because they were cheap or they were included with something else. I made no especial attempt, as I say, to get the short stuff." (Gruber to Pachon, December 18, 1953)

Gruber published his article "The Horatio Alger Paperback First Editions" in the April 15, 1954, issue of *Dime Novel Round-Up*. By the end of the following month, his first edition collection lacked only *Tony the Hero*, *Ralph Raymond's Heir*, *Finding a Fortune*, *The Young Book Agent*, and the Leather-Clads of *The Erie Train Boy*, *Dean Dunham*, and *Mark Stanton*. Fortunately, he had the bibliographic information for all the books except for the first two. "I would like to finish my Alger first edition collection," he wrote Stanley Pachon. "After all, I have been at it 12 years—and I would like to complete it



CLYDE'S face was filmed with perspiration, and tears trickled down his cheeks. Blood gushed from his mouth. He fell sideways. His eyes remained open and staring. Simon Lash looked over at the sheriff. The man's body had stopped twitching. He was dead.

Two men had met violent death. A third was murdered in California. A fourth in Mt. Miller, Illinois. And it all revolved about a little boy's death certificate stating, simply, "pneumonia" forty-seven years before.

When Aunt Clarissa gave little Stuart a copy of Horatio Alger's *Ralph Raymond's Heir* for his birthday in 1897, she thought the book cost a dollar and a quarter. Little did she realize that this particular copy would cost untold grief, four lives, fabulous sums in blackmail and send Simon Lash, the rough, tough detective in there slugging fifty years later in an attempt to solve

MURDER '97

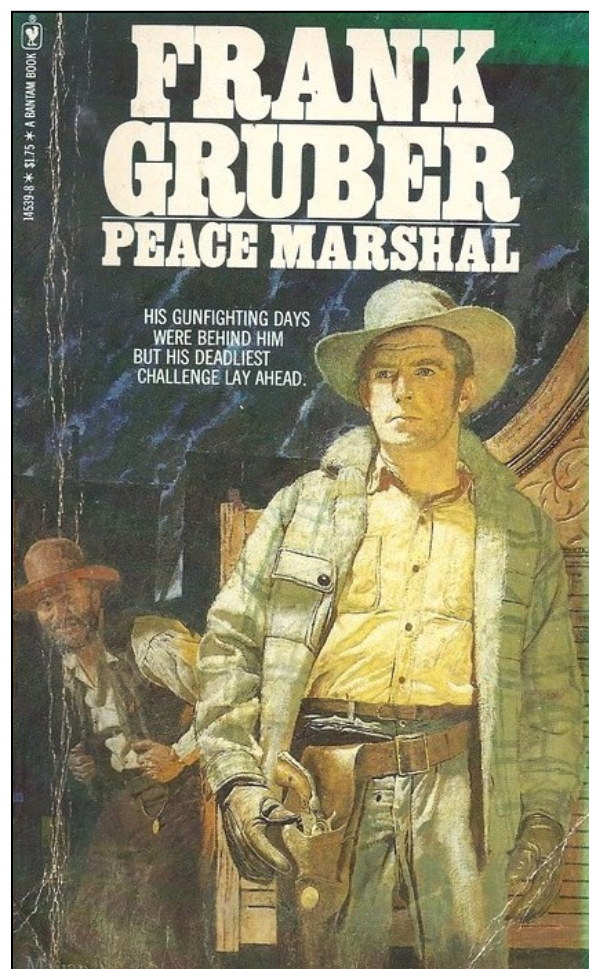
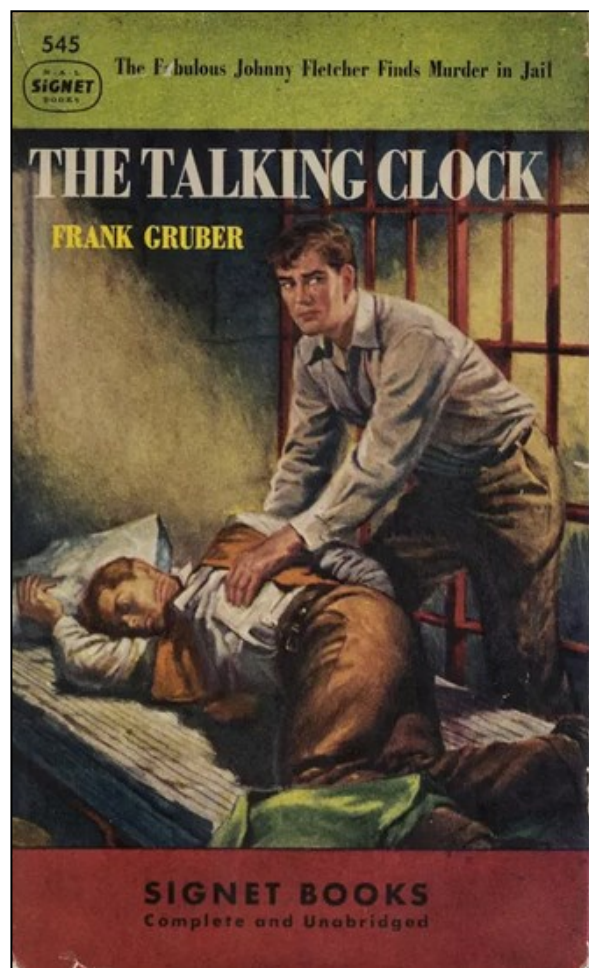
Frank Gruber's Horatio Alger book collecting hobby made it to the pages of his novel *Murder '97*, which was originally published by Rinehart & Co. in 1948. This paperback Readers-Choice Library edition (number 16) was released by the St. Johns Publishing Company, copyright 1948. In 1956, the book was republished by Joseph W. Ferman and the Jonathan Press in New York as *The Long Arm of Murder*. (Book courtesy of Robert E. Kasper, PF-327).

before the Alger bibliography is published." (Gruber to Pachon, May 29, 1954)

He evidently found what he needed, for Gruber brought out his *Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Biography and Bibliography of the Best Selling Author of All Time* in a limited edition of 750 copies (West Los Angeles: Grover Jones Press, 1961). He explained that the bibliography was not perfect, but pointed out that he didn't have the time to compile an exhaustive work. Furthermore, "I am a working writer. A hobby is still a hobby. . . . I could write ten commercial books in the time it would take to do a thorough bibliography." (*HAI*, 10)

Gruber's reservations aside, the volume—part

biography and part bibliography—was well received by collectors and book reviewers. Van Allen Bradley, author of the popular newspaper column "Gold in Your Attic," occasionally wrote about Horatio Alger's books. He profiled Gruber and mentioned his painstakingly researched work in a column, observing that "Mr. Gruber has provided the Alger collector with the first really useful checklist" of the author's books. Bradley added that "most Alger firsts are worth a modest \$7.50 to \$15. But the scarce paperbacks of the Boys' Home Library Series, Munsey's Popular Series and the Leather-Clad Tales are all worth at least \$25, in this collector's opinion." (Van Allen Bradley, "Gold in Your Attic," *Nashville Banner*, May 10, 1963)



The covers of Frank Gruber's paperbacks—particularly his mysteries and thrillers—are dramatic and vivid, designed to catch readers' attention. These represent two of Gruber's specializations: hard-boiled detective fiction and westerns. *The Talking Clock*: New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1941; paperback (above): New York, New American Library, A Signet Book, 1946. *Peace Marshal*: New York, William Morrow, 1939; paperback (above): New York, Bantam Books, 1958. (These two covers were selected for reprinting as the books' copyrights have not been renewed. Illustrations are the property of their respective copyright owners and are reproduced solely for historical purposes.)

Epilogue

Frank Gruber died in 1969, and his wife in 1995. According to the *IMDb* website, their son, Robert James Gruber, died in 1982. Young Gruber was an actor, and one of the movies in which he appeared, *Twenty Plus Two*, a 1961 suspense mystery starring David Janssen, was written by his father. The movie was based on Frank Gruber's book of the same name, published in 1961.

Over the years, H.A.S. members have wondered what happened to Gruber's collection. One theory suggests that a rich collector flew to Los Angeles in a

private jet and whisked it away. Ralph Gardner said he did not know where the books ended up. Interestingly enough, Society member (now deceased) Gilbert K. Westgard used to take his car to be serviced at a shop owned by Gruber's son. Gil, a longtime Alger researcher, naturally asked Robert about the books, but he, too, had no idea. (Robert E. Kasper, email to author, September 3, 2024)

Alas, this seems to be one mystery for which even Frank Gruber's Oliver Quade, the Human Encyclopedia with the photographic memory who could answer any question, would throw up his hands in desperation and defeat!

* Scott Chase argues in his “First Edition of *Timothy Crump’s Ward*,” in the September-October 2022 *Newsboy*, that “the paperback edition of *Timothy Crump’s Ward* . . . is indeed the first edition.”

** According to the book listing on the website of the Horatio Alger Society, the softcover *Leather-Clad Tale*, titled *\$500*, is the first edition, while the first hardcover edition, published a year later, has a slightly different title, *The \$500 Check*. (<https://horatioalgersociety.net/>)

ABBREVIATIONS

BK: *Brass Knuckles*, by Frank Gruber. Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1966.

HAJ: *Horatio Alger, Jr.*, by Frank Gruber. West Los Angeles; Grover Jones Press, 1961.

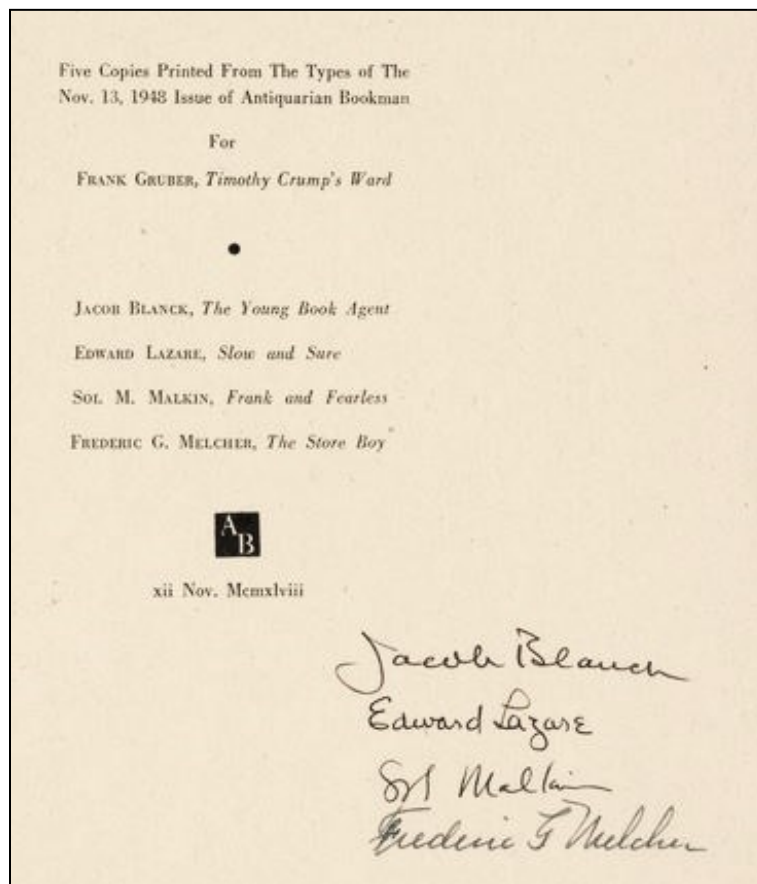
IMDb: IMDb website [formerly *Internet Movie Database*], <https://www.imdb.com/>.

TPJ: *The Pulp Jungle*, by Frank Gruber. Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1967.

TTD: *The Thrilling Detective* website, <https://thrillingdetective.com/>. [“Frank Gruber” section]

Author’s note: I wish to thank H.A.S. members Robert E. Kasper (PF-327) and Keith Thompson (PF-035) for their enthusiastic interest in my research and for scanning items from their Alger collections. I appreciate Rob’s sharing with me his copies of Frank Gruber’s letters to former H.A.S. member Stanley A. Pachon. Many thanks also go to Frank Gruber fan Michael Dirda. I am also grateful for the interlibrary loan expertise of Andrea Meckley at the University of Mary Washington’s Simpson Library. By the way, Alger biographer Ralph D. Gardner for years urged Pachon to write the “definitive” biography, a volume “that would be enriching to all of us.” (*Dime Novel Round-Up*, February 1987, 8)

An intriguing Frank Gruber sidebar. *Antiquarian Bookman* occasionally published its lead article as a special issue. Gruber’s Horatio Alger checklist was one of these separately printed, larger-than-usual publications. An inside page (see above) notes that “Five Copies Printed From The Types of The Nov. 13, 1948 Issue of *Antiquarian Bookman* For Frank Gruber, *Timothy Crump’s Ward*.” Below that appears, on four lines: “Jacob Blanck, *The Young Book Agent* / Edward Lazare, *Slow and Sure* / Sol M. Malkin, *Frank and Fearless* / Frederic G. Melcher, *The Store Boy*.” This



The inside page of the special printing of Frank Gruber’s Horatio Alger checklist, which originally appeared in the November 13, 1948, issue of *Antiquarian Bookman*. (Photograph courtesy of Keith Thompson)

was followed by “Nov.” and the Roman numerals for 13 and 1948 (the magazine’s date). Keith Thompson owns one of the five special issues of *Antiquarian Bookman*, and it is signed by these four men. Blanck was a respected authority in the field of American literature bibliography, Lazare was editor of *American Book Prices Current*, Malkin was the editor of *Antiquarian Bookman*, and Melcher was an American publisher, bookseller, and editor. All four undoubtedly knew Gruber and assisted him with his Alger collecting. Incidentally, Keith corresponded with Frank Gruber, who told him in January 1957 that “I have many, many short stories, autographs, letters, inscribed copies, etc. Even some books from Alger’s personal library—not his own books—in which he wrote his name.”

In the next Newsboy: Profiles of Horatio Alger Jr.’s informally adopted sons, John and Edward Downie.

The Boys' Home Series by A. L. Burt--Part 1

By Scott B. Chase (PF-1106)

Research into the different early editions of the Horatio Alger, Jr. titles published by A. L. Burt has been extensive, going back many decades. There are numerous articles in this publication on the subject; there is the Alger Burt bibliography by Brad Chase,¹ and there are articles in *Dime Novel Round-Up* and other publications. Even with all this published information, there are still questions to be answered. For convenience, I have given a list of the *Newsboy* articles on the subject at the end of this article.

This is the first of three articles about the hardcover, or cloth, editions in *The Boys' Home Series*. The intent of the article is to add to the great work of the many people who have already contributed a wealth of information on this subject. My approach has been to research all 24 titles in the series to gain a more complete understanding of what the publisher intended and ultimately put into practice.

As discussed in several of the identified *Newsboy* articles, the paperback *Boys' Home Library* consists of 24 titles by 10 different authors, with seven of the titles by Alger. Previous articles discuss in detail both the paperback and hardcover editions of the Alger and other titles, and what points define first editions of at least the Alger titles. No further discussion is needed on many of these topics.

Recent findings will expand what is known about three aspects of *The Boys' Home Series*: the name of the series and when Burt landed on the name, the dates when Burt moved his business during the publication of the series, and an alternative for the first hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy*.

The Boys' Home Series Name

The paperback editions are clearly named *Boys' Home Library*. It is printed prominently on the front covers of the 24 paperback titles as can be seen in the example shown in Figure 1.² There are several newspaper notices announcing *Joe's Luck*, the first title in the series, and the *Boys' Home Library*, and I include one here from the *South Bend Tribune*, Indiana, from September 5, 1887. It is shown in Figure 2.³

The first hardcover edition of *Joe's Luck*, referred to as the "Boy on a Horse" format, is discussed in Brad Chase's *Newsboy* article⁴ and again in Rob Kasper's *Newsboy* article.⁵ It is thought to have been published at about the same time as the paperback

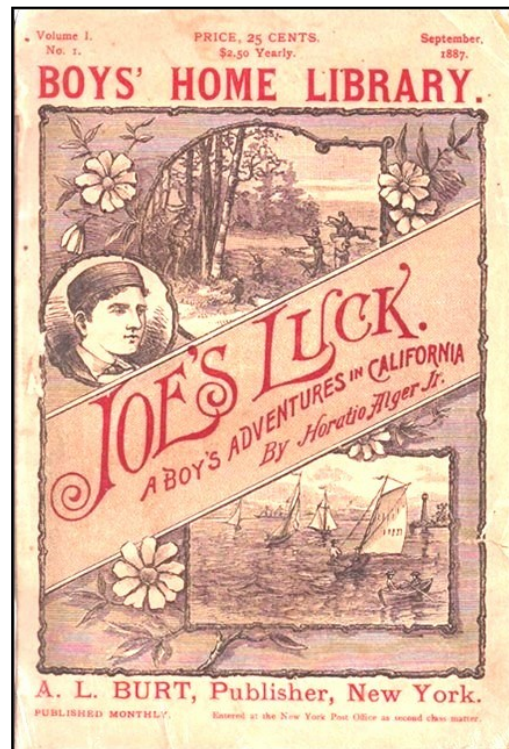


Figure 1. *Joe's Luck* by Horatio Alger, Jr. paperback

To write successful stories for the young is a difficult matter, but Horatio Alger, Jr., has succeeded as well perhaps as any living author. Two generations of boys have been delighted with his books. His popularity is due to the thoroughly healthy and sound moral tone of his stories without lessening their exciting and adventurous interest. They are decidedly "safe" books to be placed in a boy's hands, and parents realizing this provide his stories for their children without hesitation. "Joe's Luck" is the first of the "Boys' Home Library," a series which is to include boys' books of the highest grade at a low price. It is published by A. L. Burt, 162 William street, New York, in paper covers, at 25 cents, and is for sale at the Tribune store.

Figure 2. *South Bend (IN) Tribune*, September 5, 1887



GOOD BOOKS FOR BOYS.

The following stories for boys are written by authors who are experienced writers, and great favorites with boys. They understand exactly how to write stories full of excitement and adventure, and yet not demoralizing or dull. They are wholesome stories, inculcating incidentally, manliness, and inciting to whatever is good. The volumes are illustrated and decidedly attractive. Each is printed on good paper, contains 250 or more pages, and is bound in HANDSOME CLOTH BINDING.

The following are the titles:

JOE'S LUCK; or, A Boy's Adventures in California. By HORATIO ALGER, JR.
JULIAN MORTIMER; or A Brave Boy's Struggles for Home and Fortune. By HARRY CASTLEMON.
ADRIFT IN THE WILDS; or, The Adventures of Two Shipwrecked Boys. By EDWARD S. ELLIS.

Given for only 4 subscribers at 50 cents per year, or for only 2 yearly subscribers and 25 cents extra. We offer them for sale for only 60 cents postpaid to any address. The regular price is \$1.00.
 CURTIS PUBLISHING CO., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Figure 3. *The Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1888

edition in September 1887. There are ads in the back of this book, but the ads are for "Useful and Practical Books." There is no mention of the paperback series, *Boys' Home Library*.

When the paperback edition of *Joe's Luck* was published, Burt knew what the next two books in the series were going to be because they are listed on the back of the book (*Julian Mortimer* (#2) and *Adrift in the Wilds* (#3)).⁶ So, he could have included this information in the ads in the back of the "Boy on a Horse" edition of *Joe's Luck*, but he didn't.

The first paperback edition of *Adrift in the Wilds*, Number 3 in the *Boys' Home Library* published November 1887, lists to Number 6 (*Ben Burton*) in the *Boys' Home Library*.⁷ This means by the time *Frank Fowler* (#4) was published a month later, in December 1887, Burt had decided out to at least Number 6 in the *Boys' Home Library* series. However, the ads in the back of what is believed to be the first hardcover edition of *Frank Fowler*, with the 162 William Street address, are identical to those in the "Boy on a Horse" format of *Joe's Luck* other than a difference of the ordering of the ad pages.⁸ There are the same number of ad pages, the ad descriptions are exactly the same, and the prices for all the books are the same. In this book as well, there is no mention of the paperback series, *Boys' Home Library*.

There is an ad in the January 1888 issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal* that lists the first three titles of the *Boys' Home Library* (see Figure 3).⁹ The Curtis Publishing Co., the publisher of *The Ladies'*

Home Journal, is making the books available "for only 4 subscriptions at 50 cents per year." But, this ad is for the cloth editions of the three titles, and the title of the ad is "Good Books For Boys" and not the *Boys' Home Library*.

The fifth book in the series is *Guy Harris, The Runaway* by Harry Castlemon, and the ads in the William Street address hardcover book are a different version of "Useful and Practical Books" than that found in the earlier hardcover books.¹⁰ The second page of these ads is shown in Figure 4.

The book ad descriptions are much shorter; one ad title has been replaced, and there is the "Books For Boys" heading that lists the first six titles in the *Boys' Home Library* paperback series. But, it is clear from this ad, that these six titles are hardcover books. Burt did not identify them as part of his paperback series, *Boys' Home Library*, even though they are the same titles. Instead he called them "Books for Boys."

I suggest that what all this information means is Burt hadn't settled on a name for the hardcover edition of the titles in this series until after *Guy Harris* (#5) was published. This is seen in the next three titles in the series.

The next three hardcover books in the series, *Ben Burton, The Slate Picker* (#6), *Tom Temple's Career* (#7), and *Tom, The Ready* (#8), all with the 162 William Street address, have the same ad shown in Figure 5.¹¹ It can be seen that Burt now calls the hardcover editions *The Boy's Home Series*.

Maybe the misplaced apostrophe is just a typo, even though it appears this way in at least three different books, because it is fixed in the ad in *Tom*

USEFUL AND PRACTICAL BOOKS.

BOOKS FOR BOYS.

Joe's Luck; or, A Boy's Adventures in California. By Horatio Alger, Jr. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Julian Mortimer; or, A Brave Boy's Struggles for Home and Fortune. By Harry Castlemon. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Adrift in the Wilds; or, The Adventures of Two Shipwrecked Boys. By Edward S. Ellis. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Frank Fowler, the Cash Boy. By Horatio Alger, Jr. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Guy Harris, the Runaway. By Harry Castlemon. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Ben Burton, the Slate Picker. By Harry Prentice. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

THE JENNY JUNE SERIES OF MANUALS FOR LADIES.

Needle-Work: A manual of stitches and studies in embroidery and drawn work. Edited by Jenny June. Illustrated. Paper cover. *Price, 50 cents.*

Knitting and Crochet: A guide to the use of the needle and the hook. Edited by Jenny June. Illustrated. Paper cover. *Price, 50 cents.*

Ladies' Fancy Work: New Edition. A new book, giving designs and plain directions for all kinds of Fancy Needle-work. Edited by Jenny June. 700 illustrations. Paper cover. *Price, 50 cents.*

Letters and Monograms: For marking on Silk, Linen and other fabrics, for individuals, and household use. Edited by Jenny June. 1,000 illustrations. Paper cover. *Price, 50 cents.*

Burt's Selected Gems of Song: A choice collection of sixty-two favorite songs from the works of the best composers, with accompaniments for piano and organ. Paper cover. *Price, 60 cents.*

Burt's Selected Gems of Melody: A collection of eighty popular compositions of instrumental music for the home, selected from the works of favorite composers, arranged for the piano and organ. Paper cover. *Price, 60 cents.*

Burt's Selected Gems of Dance Music: A choice selection of seventy-eight pieces of standard dance music from the works of favorite composers, arranged for the piano or organ. Paper cover. *Price, 60 cents.*

Patience Pettigrew's Perplexities. A veracious history of the experiences of Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah Pettigrew, Esq., etc., etc. By Clara Augusta. Illustrated by Thos. Worth. Paper cover. *Price, 25 cents.*

Paper Flowers: A manual of designs and directions for making paper flowers from tissue paper. By Florence. Illustrated by A. O. C. Paper cover. *Price, 15 cents.*

For sale by all Booksellers, or will be sent post-paid on receipt of the price by the publisher, A. L. BURT, 162 William St., New York.

Figure 4. Guy Harris, *The Runaway* ad

Thatcher's Fortune (#11). (I haven't reviewed first edition hardcover copies of *The Castaways* (#9) and *Captain Kidd's Gold* (#10).

It is clear from this ad (Figure 5) that Burt is referring to the hardcover editions because of the added text "uniform with this volume." There is also the note on the bottom of the ad which states "bound in handsome cloth binding." He may have wanted to make it very clear that although the titles are the same as those in his paperback *Boys' Home Library* series, these are the same great stories but now they are printed on "extra paper" and "bound in handsome cloth." He may have been trying to justify a way to encourage people to spend four times as much money for the hardcover editions of the same stories.

THE BOY'S HOME SERIES.

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

JOE'S LUCK; or, A Boy's Adventures in California. By HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

JULIAN MORTIMER; or, A Brave Boy's Struggles for Home and Fortune. By HARRY CASTLEMON.

ADRIFT IN THE WILDS; or, The Adventures of Two Shipwrecked Boys. By EDWARD S. ELLIS.

FRANK FOWLER, THE CASH BOY. By HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

GUY HARRIS, THE RUNAWAY. By HARRY CASTLEMON.

BEN BURTON, THE SLATE PICKER. By HARRY PRENTICE.

TOM TEMPLE'S CAREER. By HORATIO ALGER, Jr.

TOM, THE READY; or, Up from the Lowest. By RANDOLPH HILL.

THE CASTAWAYS. By JAMES OTIS.

CAPTAIN KIDD'S GOLD. The True Story of an Adventurous Sailor Boy. By JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

A YOUNG HERO; or, Fighting to Win. By EDWARD S. ELLIS.

The above stories are printed on extra paper, and bound in handsome cloth binding, in all respects uniform with this volume, at \$1.00 per copy. They may be had of Booksellers or the Publisher.

A. L. BURT, 162 William Street, New York.

Figure 5. Ad in *Ben Burton, The Slate Picker*

This may also explain why he never put an ad for his paperback series *Boys' Home Library* in any of his hardcover books of the same titles. He wanted clear separation of the two series likely to justify the four times cost for the premium hardcover editions of the same paperback stories.

This is only speculation, but having two different names for the same 24 titles may have been part of his marketing plan. Target the cheap paperback books, *Boys' Home Library*, to one market segment, and the premium books, *The Boys' Home Series*, to another market segment. His reasoning may never be known, but what is clear is that it took him at least until the fifth book in the series, *Guy Harris, The Runaway*, for him to finally settle on the name for the hardcover editions, *The Boys' Home Series*.

As a final example, a later ad in *The Ladies' Home Journal* (Figure 6) lists seven titles to Tom

Temple's Career.¹² As with the previous *Ladies' Home Journal* ad, this is for the hardcover editions but now the title of the ad is *The Boys' Home Series*.

Burt Moving His Business

As pointed out in several of the listed *Newsboy* articles, one of the identifiers in the Burt hardcover books that helps with determining if a particular book is a first edition is the street address listed on the ad pages for the publisher. It has been known for many years that Burt started his business at 162 William Street, moved it to 56 Beekman Street, and then to 66 Reade Street. He moved his business again a few times after this.

A key aspect of this address information when determining what a first edition is for each of the 24 hardcover titles is the timing for when he moved to 56 Beekman Street and then to 66 Reade Street.

The first paperback edition of *Captain Kidd's Gold* (#10) has a June 1888 date and 56 Beekman address on the back cover.¹³ The *Nebraska State Journal* has an ad for this book on June 17, 1888, and the notice gives Burt's address as 162 William Street (see Figure 7).¹⁴

Another ad in the Pennsylvania newspaper, *The Plain Speaker*, June 19, 1888, gives Burt's address as 56 Beekman Street (see Figure 8).¹⁵ So, it seems clear that Burt moved his business from William Street to Beekman Street sometime in June 1888.

What this means is the first editions of the first nine hardcover titles in *The Boys' Home Series*, up to *The Castaways* by James Otis, will have the 162 William Street address.

For when Burt moved from 56 Beekman Street to 66 Reade Street, it is seen in the October 4, 1890, issue of *Publishers' Weekly* shown in Figure 9 that Burt was still at the 56 Beekman Street address in October 1890.¹⁶

Figure 10 shows that by early June 1891 he had "recently moved" to 66 Reade Street.¹⁷ So, it is likely that Burt moved to 66 Reade Street in April, May, or very early June 1891.

What this means for all hardcover titles in *The Boys' Home Series* from *Captain Kidd's Gold* (#10) by James Franklin Fitts to *Captured by Zulus* (#24) by Harry Prentice (published June 1890) is the earliest hardcover editions will have the 56 Beekman address.

THE BOYS' HOME SERIES.
A series of spirited stories for boys, by popular writers. Uniform in size and binding.
Any one of these Books given for only 8 trial subscribers at 10 cents each.

Joe's Luck; or, A BOY'S ADVENTURES IN CALIFORNIA. By Horatio Alger, Jr. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Julian Mortimer; or, A BRAVE BOY'S STRUGGLES FOR HOME AND FORTUNE. By Harry Castlemon. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Adrift in the Wilds; or, THE ADVENTURES OF TWO SHIPWRECKED BOYS. By Edward S. Ellis. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Frank Fowler, THE CASH BOY. By Horatio Alger, Jr. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Guy Harris, THE RUNAWAY. By Harry Castlemon. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Ben Burton, THE SLATE-PICKER. By Harry Prentice. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

Tom Temple's Career, By Horatio Alger, Jr. Illustrated. Cloth, price \$1.00.

CURTIS PUB. CO., Philadelphia, Pa.

Figure 6. *The Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1888

"Captain Kid's Gold. The True Story of an Adventurous Sailor Boy." By James Franklin Fitts. No. 10 of the "Boy's Home Library." Paper, 12mo. Price 25 cents. Published by A. L. Burt, 162 William St., New York. The author of this number of Mr. Burt's excellent Boy's Library has caught the true spirit of Daniel Defoe and Captain Marryatt, and he has here given to the boys of America a most fascinating story of the sea, for which it is very safe to predict a wide reading and large popularity. Not only is it a clever and entertaining story, but it embodies such lessons in geography and history as to make it of sterling value to parents and instructors, while the high moral tone that everywhere breathes through it is a strong recommendation. The author has evidently travelled far and seen much as his pen-pictures of interesting localities could never have been drawn at second-hand. The book is unique in its way, blending the best literary entertainment for youth with useful instruction and commendable morals. The illustrations are apt, and the volume cannot fail to make its way to the boys.

Figure 7. *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), June 17, 1888

Our Book Table.

"THE MIDNIGHT MARRIAGE," by Amanda M. Douglas. No. 1 of the "Manhattan Series" of Popular American Novels. Paper, 12mo. Price 25 cents. Published by A. L. Burt, 56 Beekman street, New York.

Figure 8. *The Plain Speaker* (Hazelton, PA), June 19, 1888

A. L. BURT, 56 Beekman St., N. Y.
Library of the World's Best Books.

Antoninus, Meditations	\$1;	2.00
Auerbach, On the heights.....	\$1;	2.00
Blackmore, Lorna Doone.....	\$1;	2.00
Carlyle, Past and present	\$1;	2.00
Chipman, Budd Boyd's triumph.....		1.00
Craik, John Halifax	\$1;	2.00
Darwin, The origin of species	\$1;	2.00
De Quincey, Confessions of an English opium-eater	\$1;	2.00
Ebers, Uarda	\$1;	2.00
Eliot, Romola.....	\$1;	2.00
Emerson, Essays, 1st and 2d ser	\$1;	2.00
Guizot, History of civilization.....	\$1;	2.00
Kingsley, Hypatia	\$1;	2.00
Lamb, Essays of Elia.....	\$1;	2.00
La Motte Fouqué, Undine.....	\$1;	2.00
Otis, The treasure finders.....		1.00
Scott, Ivanhoe.....	\$1;	2.00
Spencer, The data of ethics	\$1;	2.00
Thackeray, Vanity Fair.....	\$1;	2.00

Figure 9. *Publishers' Weekly*, October 4, 1890

A. L. BURT, who has recently removed to 66 Reade St., N. Y., has now ready in the *Manhattan Library*, "Romola," "Undine, and other Tales," "Jane Eyre," "The Moonstone" and "The Last Days of Pompeii."

Figure 10. *Publishers' Weekly*, June 6, 1891

USEFUL AND PRACTICAL BOOKS.

Cyclopedia of Natural History: Comprising descriptions of animal life: Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Batrachians and Fishes. Their structure, Habits and Distribution. For popular use. By Chas. C. Abbott, M. D. 620 pages. 500 illustrations. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

The National Standard History of the United States: A complete and concise account of the growth and development of the Nation, from its discovery to the present time. By Everitt Brown. 600 pages. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

The National Standard Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Literature, the Arts, and the Sciences, for popular use. Containing over 30,000 articles pertaining to the various Arts and Sciences. 700 pages. 1,000 illustrations. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Law Without Lawyers: A Compendium of Business and Domestic Law, for popular use. By Henry B. Corey, LL. B., member of New York Bar. Cloth. *Price, \$1.25.*

The National Standard Dictionary: A pronouncing lexicon of the English Language, containing 40,000 words, and illustrated with 700 wood-cuts, to which is added an appendix of useful and valuable information. 500 pages. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

What Every One Should Know: A cyclopedia of Practical Information, containing complete directions for making and doing over 4,000 things necessary in Business, the Trades, the Shop, the Farm and the Kitchen. 516 pages. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Dr. Danelson's Counselor, with Recipes: A trusty guide for the family. An illustrated book of 720 pages, treating Physiology, Hygiene, Marriage, Medical Practice, etc. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.50.*

Boys' Useful Pastimes: Pleasant and profitable amusement for spare hours, in the use of tools. By Prof. Robert Griffith, A. M. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, \$1.00.*

Friendly Chats With Girls: A series of Talks on Manners, Duty, Behavior, and Social Customs. Containing sensible advice and counsel on a great variety of important matters which girls should know. By Mrs. M. A. Kidder. Illustrated. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

A Handy Classical and Mythological Dictionary, for popular use, with 70 illustrations. By H. C. Faulkner. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

A Handy Dictionary of Synonyms, with which are combined the words opposite in meaning. By H. C. Faulkner. For the use of all those who would speak or write the English Language fluently and correctly. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

Talks With Homely Girls: On health and beauty, their preservation and cultivation. By Frances Smith. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

Famous People of All Ages: Who they were, when they lived, and why they are famous. By W. H. Van Orden. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

The Usages of the Best Society: A manual of social etiquette. By Frances Stevens. Cloth. *Price, 50 cents.*

For sale by all Booksellers, or will be sent post-paid on receipt of the price by the publisher, A. L. BURT, 56 Beekman St., New York.

Figure 11. Ad in *The Errand Boy*

First Edition of *The Errand Boy*

The first hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy* (#14) is discussed in several articles in *Newsboy*. In his second and third articles, Robert E. Kasper indicates that the paperback edition of *The Errand Boy* lists 17 titles in the *Boys' Home Library* ad and therefore the first hardcover edition is a "thin book" that should likewise list no more than 17 titles in the ads in the back of the book in *The Boys' Home Series* ad.¹⁸ Bob Eastlack suggests that the first hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy* is a "thin book" with 20 titles listed in *The Boys' Home Series* ad.¹⁹

I offer another possibility for the first hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy*. An early "thin" hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy* has surfaced with one page of ads in the back of the book.²⁰ The ad is for "Useful and Practical Books" and it has the 56 Beekman Street address. This page is printed on the back of the last page of story text, page 255 (see Figure 11). This ad page is identical to the ad page found in *Tom Thatcher's Fortune* (#11) that has 13 titles listed in *The Boys' Home Series*.

It would be easy to conclude then that this edition of *The Errand Boy* would equate to 13 titles listed in *The Boys' Home Series*. However, this would likely be an erroneous conclusion since the paperback edition of *The Errand Boy* lists 17 titles in the *Boys' Home Library*.

It is unlikely Burt was using up old stock of ad pages since the ad page is printed on the back side of the last page of the story. Why Burt didn't include an ad for *The Boys' Home Series* in this book may never be determined, but I have seen multiple copies of this edition of *The Errand Boy* which has just the one ad page of "Useful and Practical Books." So, I don't believe this is a test or sample edition of some sort, and it should be considered a valid edition of this title. For now, until additional information surfaces, it should be considered a contender for the first hardcover edition of *The Errand Boy*.

There are still several mysteries to be solved regarding the hardcover books in *The Boys' Home Series*. Some of these will be discussed in forthcoming articles, while others will likely never be solved.

I want to thank the many people who conducted the initial research into the two boys' series published by A. L. Burt. Their work laid the foundation for my research. I also want to thank my wife, Lisa, for editing the final version of this article.

Newsboy articles pertaining to Burt's Alger first editions or their paperback or hardcover series:

Forrest Campbell, "Those Burt Editions," April 1966, Vol. 4, No. 10.

Dale Thomas, "How to Recognize Burt Hardcover First Editions," November 1975, Vol. 14, No. 4.

Robert E. Williman, "The Alger 'First Hardcover Editions' Published by A. L. Burt," January-February 1983, Vol. 21, Nos. 6-7.

Brad Chase, "More on Alger Books Published by A. L. Burt," November-December 1984, Vol. 23, Nos. 7-8.

Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Library," (1st article of 3), July-August 2000, Vol. 38, No. 4.

Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Series," (2nd article of 3), July-August 2001, Vol. 39, No. 4.

Bradford S. Chase, "Oops . . . Another A. L. Burt Find," September-October 2007, Vol. 45, No. 5.

William R. Gowen, "Other Similar A. L. Burt Covers," September-October 2007, Vol. 45, No. 5.

Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Library Series," (3rd article of 3), September-October 2007, Vol. 45, No. 5.

Robert D. Eastlack, "Collecting Fez Editions . . . and Other A. L. Burt Publisher Alger Editions," November-December 2013, Vol. 51, No. 6.

NOTES

¹ Bradford S. Chase, *Horatio Alger Books Published by A. L. Burt*, privately published, 1983.

² Horatio Alger, Jr., *Joe's Luck*, A. L. Burt, September 1887.

³ *South Bend (IN) Tribune*, September 5, 1887, p. 2, col. 4.

⁴ Brad Chase, "More on Alger Books Published by A. L. Burt," *Newsboy*, November-December 1984, p. 3.

⁵ Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Series," *Newsboy*, July-August 2001, p. 5.

⁶ Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Library," *Newsboy*, July-August 2000, p. 3.

⁷ Edward S. Ellis, *Adrift in the Wilds*, A. L. Burt, November 1887.

⁸ Horatio Alger, Jr., *Frank Fowler, The Cash Boy*, A. L. Burt, 1887.

⁹ *The Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1888, p. 17.

¹⁰ Harry Castlemon, *Guy Harris, The Runaway*, A. L. Burt, 1887.

¹¹ Harry Prentice, *Ben Burton, The Slate-Picker*, A. L. Burt, 1888.

¹² *The Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1888, p. 19.

¹³ James Franklin Fitts, *Captain Kidd's Gold*, A. L. Burt, June 1888.

¹⁴ (*Lincoln*) *Nebraska State Journal*, June 17, 1888, p. 5.

¹⁵ (*Hazleton, PA*) *The Plain Speaker*, June 19, 1888, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Publishers' Weekly*, October 4, 1890, p. 494, under "Order List."

¹⁷ *Publishers' Weekly*, June 6, 1891, p. 798, under "Literary and Trade Notes."

¹⁸ Kasper, "A. L. Burt," July-August 2001, p. 6; Robert E. Kasper, "The A. L. Burt Boys' Home Library Series," *Newsboy*, September-October 2007, p. 8.

¹⁹ Robert D. Eastlack, "Collecting Fez Editions . . . and Other A. L. Burt Publisher Alger Editions," *Newsboy*, November-December, 2013, p. 9.

²⁰ Horatio Alger, Jr., *The Errand Boy*, A. L. Burt, 1888.

MEMBERSHIP

Address change

Lee Switzer (PF-882)
2100 Silver Lake Rd., NW, Apt. 221
New Brighton, MN 55112

Moments of the Past . . .



In the 1960s and 1970s, the Horatio Alger Society often hosted memorial services to commemorate Alger's death on July 18, 1899. Gathered at his gravesite in Natick, Massachusetts, on July 18, 1966, were, from left to right: H.A.S. member and *Dime Novel Round-Up* Editor Edward T. "Eddie" LeBlanc; Rev. Donald Nelson of the First Baptist Church in Natick; Judge Daniel Gillen of the Boston Municipal Court, principal speaker; and Society members Max Goldberg of Natick, organizer of the annual event; Steve Press; Roy Wendell; Ed Levy; Forrest Campbell, co-founder of the Society; and Ed Reynolds.

(*President's Column*, continued from page 2)

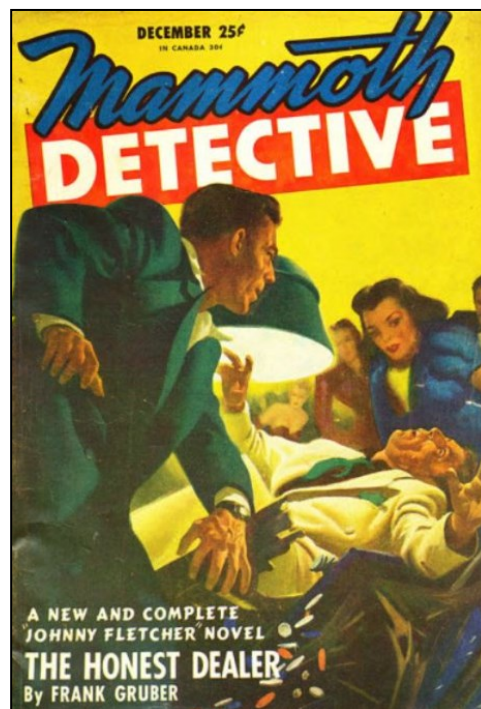
determination. I liked ChatGPT's and Gemini's emphasis on the hero achieving middle-class respectability, though Gemini had also associated Alger with "rags to riches." There wasn't much biography anywhere, though ChatGPT offered one reasonably accurate biographic tidbit: "Alger himself was involved in philanthropy and worked with homeless boys in New York City, which informed the realism in his depictions of urban poverty and struggle." Meta's "Alger" entry was cursory and contained more inaccuracies—the only three novels mentioned include *Silas Marner* (!) and included inflated sales figures.

I rather liked ChatGPT's treatment of key themes in Alger's work in the "Success Literature Horatio Alger" search. Though all three LLMs had a key themes section, ChatGPT's was a bit richer. In this search, Gemini invented another non-existent Alger novel, *Mark's Millions* (1870)! Where is that coming from? And under "Horatio Alger Story," ChatGPT thinks Alger wrote "during the late 19th and early 20th centuries."

Meta did a bit better with the American Dream of Success, but ChatGPT and Gemini were more extensive in coverage. All three LLMs listed and explained some key elements of the Dream; only Gemini linked Alger to "American Dream of Success." All but Meta talked about evolution or changing perspectives of the Dream, and even discussed criticisms offered. On "Horatio Alger Story," Meta and ChatGPT provided central features of an Alger story; Gemini did but elaborated a bit more on key themes of Alger's works. For "Horatio Alger Hero," all three LLMs focus on key elements that define an Alger hero; while Meta offers examples of Horatio Alger heroes, the examples often missed the mark.

A "rags to riches" query yields nothing on Alger, yet "rags to riches" is mentioned in each of the "Horatio Alger" searches. Maybe this is fine, since only very late Alger novels feature a hero who becomes especially wealthy; it would be better if this is not how Alger stories are perceived. Only Gemini mentions Alger in a search for "American Dream of Success." It nicely locates the concept in 19th century "ideals of individual liberty, equality of opportunity, and self-reliance," but its mention of Alger associates the author with "rags-to-riches stories."

If someone knew nothing and wanted to find out a bit about Alger using AI, my brief investigation suggests from best to worst of those tested: Gemini, ChatGPT, then Meta. They would learn nothing about his life from any of them.



The works of Frank Gruber, one of the first Alger researchers, appeared in magazines as well as in books. The December 1946 issue of *Mammoth Detective* contained his novel *The Honest Dealer*, featuring detective Johnny Fletcher, while his story "Death Elects a Governor" was published in the September 21, 1940, issue of *Detective Fiction Weekly*. Gruber's life is chronicled beginning on page 6 of this *Newsboy*.

