
PULP ERA!
NEW SERIES!
E. HOFFMANN PRICE
ON
HARRY OLMSTED
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QUEST EDITORIAL

by BASIL WELLS

THE WESTWARD TIDE

In earlier years there was an itch by the Europeans to trade and exploit the unknown, or little-known lands, to the east and to the south of them. In earlier centuries Asia also sent various waves of seafaring families eastward to populate the Pacific islands. But then the drive took a new turn. From the east there came the hordes of barbarians that swept again and again over Europe.

That drive continued and finally culminated in several tent-ative pushes across the Atlantic by Vikings, Irish, and possibly Phoenicians or Africans.

Too much has been made in recent years about the forty or so years of the Civil War period and the ensuing years of expansion and the lawless years. Many younger readers have gained the impression that the wagon trains, the cowboys, the outlaws and Indians and settling a raw new land belong only to that brief period of time.

Not so, of course. From the first landings of the Spaniards, English, French, Dutch and other Europeans the surge of the pioneers was always westward -- with expansion southward and northward as well.

The early trails were by water. Rivers and lesser streams were the first routes. Pioneers poled or paddled rafts, canoes, or keelboats with their families aboard. Renegades of all sorts, as well as hostile Indians, slaughtered them for their poor possessions even as they did in what we now call "the old west". Along the old game trails other men pushed strings of pack ponies. The trails would become roads inevitably, but there was always new empty land beyond.

And there was war between red and white, English and French and Spanish and Americans along the frontiers. Kenneth Roberts, Robert Chambers, Cooper and many others have written about the western saga of those early days. With muzzle-loading muskets and pistols against rapid fire bows and arrows they often fought and won. And later rifles somewhat evened the odds.

Louis L'Amour, in recent years, has successfully brought those early years of heading westward into focus through the family histories of his Sacketts, and Talons, and their like. He realized that the western scene should be painted on a broader canvas than we are presently using.

Most of you are somewhat familiar with the Trail of Tears and the deaths of so many peaceful and industrious Indians as they were forced to migrate out to Oklahoma so greedy men could take over their farms and livestock. But do you realize how many years this lasted and the scale and number of the battles and un-reported massacres that occurred?

The land-hungry large ranchers who drove away or killed their lesser brethren, as well as the nesters, were pikers when compared with the giant land grabbing of our more remote ancestors.

The pattern of a hunger for more room and more opportunities and freedom from too many rules has dominated our expansion over the centuries. And the robbing and cruelty of a small fraction of the movers and settlers has always been a part of the irresistible westward movement toward the Pacific.

Now that, to a large extent, there is no more fertile, or unclaimed land left upon this continent, the drive for expansion is taking a number of different paths. One of these paths that is popular, is to look to space. With a worldwide burden of debt and an increasing glut of population this appears impossible. Without the unlikely discovery of a cheap source of anti-gravity that route to "goin' out West" seems closed.

Today, with your stomach ulcers, business worries, and tax problems, there remains one temporary escape into a sometimes romanticized, but pleasantly entertaining simpler world.

Your libraries possess hundreds, even thousands of books about our West. Discover the American West that started at the shores of the Atlantic and along the Gulf of Mexico. Live with our forebears as they followed rivers and overland trails that led forever westward.

Basil Wells

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editor's note -- the following article is a chapter from an unpublished book by E. HOFFMAN PRICE: "FRIENDS OF YESTERYEAR".

I wish that Ed was still with us. He was a great man and a great author. While I never met Ed personally, we corresponded over the years and I was proud to call him friend. He gave me permission to publish this chapter, but I'm not sure if we will ever get to read the rest of the book. It will be a shame if we can't. There is a lot of pulp history here.

E. HOFFMAN PRICE. We'll miss you.

So read on and appreciate this tribute to Harry Olmsted by E. Hoffman Price.

HARRY OLMSTED

August 10, 1889 --- April 2, 1970

Since he'd recently recovered from severe illness, Harry Olmsted didn't come to the door to greet us. We followed his wife, Frances, to the spacious living room where he awaited us.

We: our good friend, Ode Stade, retired District Forest Ranger, and Don Ackerman, Harry's son-in-law. Don had driven me and Odo to the house in Riverside, California.

Before ever I met Harry, he had lived three lives --- civil engineer --- fictioneer --- and, Indian trader. Though well along in years, his grip was firm, and his blue eyes keen, intently focused. Though quiet voiced, Harry commanded attention. In addition to his presence, or perhaps I should say, as an important factor in it, one sensed then and there that this tall, rangy man knew what he was talking about. More inclined to listen than to speak, his cordiality reached out in an inclusive welcome.

We'd come to discuss Don Ackerman's project, the publication of a local magazine of regional interest. For this, Odo was to translate selected recipes from an old German cookbook, a combination of historical and gourmet. Harry was to contribute some of his western yarns for reprinting. The only regional material I could have contributed was a few crime novelettes of the Indio-Coachella date and orange town some eighty miles distant. The fact of it is that I'd come primarily to see Harry. Regional magazines did, sometimes, make expenses and occasionally show a profit, but I could not build up enthusiasm. I'd been there before. So, no doubt, had Harry.

We did not get to the merits of the proposition. Harry had sold all rights to his stories. As though speaking for me, he said for himself, "In these days, a story in the mail was dismissed, forgotten. Once I dropped it into the slot, my thoughts would be centered on the one that'd go out next week. The new day's work, and tomorrow's completion left me with no interest in subsidiary rights."

Long faced consternation: young Mr. Ackerman was surprised and dismayed that a veteran fictioneer could have been so careless, so unbusinesslike. While he still groped for words, tactful phrasings which would express his feelings, I cut in.

"Harry, I know what you mean! And how you felt. We were so bubbling over with the next yarn! We knew there was no end to the supply, we knew we'd never tire, never go stale, we knew that a thing done has an end. When a yarn bogged down, or got kicked around, we'd not revise it unless an editor asked us to. Better scrap it and start something that did move."

"Leave it to the clods, the perpetual amateurs, each with his one story, that gem nobody but the writer loved. Anyway, I did finally sell First American Serial Rights Only --- and what'd that get me? Of the stuff not sold on such terms, Arkham House had no trouble whatever in reprinting it in a collection published in 1967. Don, there's no problem at all --- relax, no sweat!"

Harry conceded, in a few words, that I'd summed it up accurately. My impression was that he simply did not want to be bothered with trivialities. If Don wanted to reprint some Olmsted yarns, have at it! As far as a real writer was concerned, it was more fun doing a new story than to fool around re-selling an old one.

With three careers, three lives behind him, Harry smiled and wasted no words. In our day, each had been a full dress professional, and the way things were shaping up, that afternoon, I saw my chance to express my appreciation of the man, and without dragging it in by the hair or by the heels ---

It all came about this way: after some years of selling Spicy Westerns, I became interested in serious yarns instead of the Simon Bolivar Grimes burlesques. Despite their flimsiness each story was based on solid research. Whereas much western fiction was pure trash, there was a fine potential for honest fiction, quality stuff, and without going pretentious, stories which one could call "historical". Because of my study of the Old West, I found the customs and viewpoints and modes of living ever more fascinating. I learned that mining towns, wagon trains, stage coaching, Jewish push-cart peddlers, and the antics of whiskey salesmen were far more interesting than the dreary business of cattle rustling, quick-draw artists, crooked sheriffs and water rights. My agent, August Lenniger, had a ready answer for a writer finally established in the adventure magazines.

"Read Harry Olmsted.He's one of the best. That'll give you the slant. Read Harry, and then, be yourself, do your usual job of writing a good adventure story."

I mentioned this to Ode Stade, who knew a thing or two about the west, and also, knew Harry Olmsted.. "Your agent couldn't have given you better advice. Harry offers more than shoot-outs. Each story is based on human nature, each has a theme, you might say, a lesson in life and living, but never a sermon or a lecture."

So I read a few Olmsted yarns and got the point: he wrote of people who spoke the speech of human beings, not the weird jargon of nowhere on earth, which Manhattan Cowboys had invented In no time at all, I'd crashed Street & Smith's Western Story and at a rate equal to what Adventure and Short Stories paid. This was for stories done in my own manner. An imitation

Olmsted wouldn't have sold anywhere. But in my spare time, once in awhile, I'd read one of his yarns for the fun of it. In due course, but far from as soon as I should have, I got in touch with Harry: and I learned finally what an interesting character he was.

When he was ten years old, he met Los Angeles Chinatown. This was because the Dowager Empress of China appointed Harry's father to the post of Imperial Topographer, to organize and direct an aerial survey and mapping of China, her dependencies and her neighbors. The work was to start about 1901, and continue for more than ten years. The entire project depended upon the success of an aircraft developed by Santos-Dumont; apparently the Fairchild aerial camera was already established and available.

Mr. Olmsted had large plans for his son: Harry went to Chinatown to learn the language from the Superintendent of the Chinese Congregational Church. Characteristically, the course consisted largely of hymns, of no conceivable use in surveying either on land or in flight, and, in the practice of calligraphy. However, there were bright spots, such as hearing the teacher's anecdotes of school days in a Christian mission in Hunan Province.

Better yet, there were guided tours through Chinatown, which included pauses for drinking oolong tea, eating lichees, candied lily root and ginger root, the sort of goodies I loved as a kid. But in some respects, Harry was way ahead of me: he got glimpses and smells of reeking opium joints, and of joss houses fragrant with the aromatic fumes of incense. Gaudy, red-stockinged American whores passed him in the narrow corridors as they went about, hustling business.

"Heaps of Memories," Harry summed up. "You're having fun and thrills as I did ---"

"As you did, the year after I was born! And here I am, wondering whether I'll live to see any of my Chinatown stuff in print."

Harry resumed, "I didn't dream of any aesthetic use of it, not as story material, the way you have."

The way it all turned out for Harry was another of Fortune's ironic twists. All eyes had been on Santos-Dumont and his dirigible which, by 1901, had qualified. Meanwhile, the Boxer Uprising in China gave the Dowager Empress and her Government all they could handle, without attempting to map the land.

Asking Harry how come he'd gone out for westerns would have been as silly as asking me why I'd set my heart on doing the adventure story. Like many of us, he remembered an editor whose

influence had been vitally important, and spoke of him.

"When I was starting, that fabulous editor, Jack Kelley, told me to read, read, read, not to imitate, but to fill myself with the lore, the mannerisms, the ways of speaking, so that the flavor and the spirit of the old west became part of my tools, leaving me free to plot and turn out just that much more copy."

"Too many gents like the late Chuck Martin, of Oceanside, thought production hung on fast draw. Nuts! I substituted Navajos and their religion, relic collecting and the like, which led in good time to me buying the Aztec Trading Post."

Harry bailed out of the fiction business in 1950.

"When I heard that," I told him, "I was sorry, but at the same time, it bucked up my morale. I didn't feel so low about having to call it a day myself. Twice you gave me a lift, without ever having suspected it!"

Harry's expression, when not actively animated, tended toward the indrawn, the serious, the reserved. It was good to see and hear his warm response to the appreciation of one who had been through the mill. The bond and the response: akin to the meeting of regimental comrades.

"I was too old to undertake a new and different type of fiction. I was a pulpateer, had twenty two years of perfectly delightful and gainful occupation, and I was ready to be turned out to pasture. So, Frances and I, we retired to an Indian trading post, out in the Navajo country. Hard work, none of it mental, gave us new youth and inspiration. But in 1964, finding my health failing at seventy five, I sold out and really retired

"So, here I am, looking back at three careers --- fifteen years as a civil engineer, twenty two as a fictioneer, not to mention six years as a punk, and two as a contractor, and the equivalent of four years in surveying parties, goofing off from school."

"Quite the opposite from your experience," Harry continued. "I do not look upon my departure from writing as unpalatable. I was overjoyed to be out. I was burned out after 1200 story sales --- 12,000,000 words sold, which meant a ten thousand worder, or a bit longer, each week for twenty two years."

Harry's words packed meaning. In one year, one only, I came close to his average. In twenty years of full time writing, my production score was not much over 5,000,000 words, something like forty percent of his. His summary gave me a basis for a more accurate evaluation of my writing during the final phase of the pulps. I, too, had been burned out, fed up: what I regretted was having to abandon a way of life.

Inevitably, we got around to the subject of Indians: and in Harry's presence, I would not be inclined to emphasize my full three months in the lands of the Osage Nation.

The parents of some of my contemporaries believed that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. Quite a few others, their vision not beclouded by the current passion against racism in today's specialized sense, feel that the Red Man got a dirtier deal than did any who came to this country from Asia, Africa, or Europe. Harry's appraisal, for me an eye-opener, is worth passing along:

"I used to feel the same way you do about the contemptible tricks the Pale Face Brother pulled on the Noble Red Man. Finally, I had my chance to study the American Indian. If it could be summed up in a few words, I'd say, it's human nature, the perfidious and nasty heart of mankind."

"When Palefaces landed in the New World, there were not many more, if any more Indians in America than now. Why not? Tribal hate. War. Murder. Scalp taking. Slave taking, especially women. Gang raping female captives. Good acts by Anglos or Indians were soon forgotten. An evil act by a criminal type was remembered. Uncle Sam would sign a treaty in good faith. Some criminally inclined Indian Agent or young, irresponsible buck would break it for personal reasons, and the treaty was scrapped, and blood flowed.

"So I don't condemn the White Man nor the Indian. Blame human nature. Man is born with a criminal mind, and is getting no better fast!"

As surveyor and civil engineer, Harry Olmsted soaked up more than a standard portion of physical work: and his years as a fictioneer had given him an overdose of mental work. The Aztec Trading Post, he never let me forget, combined his previous types of experience, and forced him to a new peak in each. His day began at sun-up, when he opened the place and set to work, cleaning up --- which, after the previous day's influx of tourists, it needed, and plenty! He was somewhat beyond the reach of the janitorial services who make the rounds in urban spots.

I didn't bother to ask him why he didn't get a Navajo janitor.

His breakfasts were usually eaten standing up, near the door. He rarely was so lucky as to finish a meal without tourist interruption. Sometimes, the flow of trade was fairly even, but every so often, a bus-load of tourists rolled in.

"And then it was a madhouse! Imagine trying to wait on fifty customers who only had a few minutes --- and each one, waving some curio, and yelping for service! Wife and I doing our

best, and it was never good enough!

"Never knew if we collected for half the stuff. Seldom time for lunch, or even eating on the fly! Sometimes a lull in the afternoon, but no rest --- the depleted stock had to be shored up. Lucky if we could close at ten, and then, an hour straightening up the stock. Finally, lights out, and to bed --- too tired to sleep. That was me, from sixty one to seventy five. I was wiry enough to take it for fourteen years, but I was cracking up, and Frances was failing, too. So, we sold, and finally found our real retirement.

A rugged fourteen years? Of course it was, but I never wept for Harry --- he was a rugged man. And, those were rich years. He learned much about sand painting, and making Kachina dolls - with the tricks memory plays me, and my error in trusting memory instead of making copious notes, I am obliged to admit that I am not sure whether sand painting is a form of divination, and the Kachina doll, an expression of Navajo magic --- and whether Harry ever undertook, as an experiment, to weave even a portion of a rug --- I'm willing to bet, however, that he didn't weave the large ones which gave character --- along with the sand paintings and Kachina dolls --- to that spacious living room in Riverside. Not saying he couldn't have. Simply, when the hell would he have found time?

At times, Navajos would come into the post to trade, and then, there were salesmen who offered the standard tourist trinkets. There was so much which Harry and I never got around to talking out. Such as, comparing his experiences with those of a trader near Mancos, Colorado, who had to fight like a tiger to get "his" Indians to dig in and weave at least a few genuine specimens, for the few who could pay the shocking price.

My wonderings about photos taken during those fourteen eventful years didn't last long enough to count. I'll give you Harry's story, paraphrased with reasonable accuracy, and guaranteed free of editorializing by me:

Paraphrased, and not, repeat, not quotes, even though set down in the form of such ---

"I envy you your photographic talent. I am allergic to the art. I needed it badly in a certain phase of my trading post business but had to give it up. Bought a good camera and exposed thirty odd films. Never got a picture. Took camera back. Dealer took a pic inside his store and asked me to do as he did. His snap was excellent. Mine was streaked with light. Same view. Shaking his head, he gave my money back. Said I had radioactivity in my tissues that streaked the film. I dunno."

Neither do I. There's too much time wasted explaining facts. The only exceptions occur when, as is seldom the case, the explanation is followed by a marked improvement over that

which had explainable shortcomings. That Harry Olmsted, an unusually versatile person, didn't get far as a cameraman in Navajo-land, is phenomenal, but I am not interested in trying to explain it. Neither Harry nor I could benefit by the answer, even if it were correct.

Back, now, to that February 14, 1970, and the Olmsted living room, with its twelve by twenty foot Navajo rug, and the sand paintings and Kachina dolls from Navajo Land, where we sat with Harry, with his and with our memories.

Sinking sun --- golden light --- longer shadows --- and Harry still needed rest --- Frances served sherry. My moment had arrived.

I took the floor, and they granted it. "Harry I dedicate this glass to a rich afternoon, and to our next meeting. No doubt it's monotonous when I repeat myself, but I'll risk it, and tell you once more that your work was set up as an example of how to do westerns. You and Odo know that I crashed the top markets, first whack. This time, I'm declaring the fact with witnesses to hear me speak my thanks for having been such a good example. All this is good to remember. There are so few of us left that this meeting is heart warming, good for the soul."

I straightened up out of my elderly slouch. For a moment, we regarded each other, eye to eye. "Sir, I salute you," I said, and snapped up my hand. Harry got to his feet, and returned the salute.

However much this has the outer face of posture and posing, this was a moment of reality. I spoke from the heart, an old time professional to another and better one. No protocol could warrent our exchange of military salutes, all the more so since we'd never got around to his military service. Though I knew that if ever he'd been a soldier, he'd have been a good one. All that counted was that the years were closing in on us, and while there were lots of Navajos, there were very few Mohicans left, topside. I had paid my respects, my tribute, and, he had accepted. Mission accomplished.

End of a grand session. No doubt, Harry could do with silence and rest. Having spoken my exit lines, or curtain lines, it was time to haul out.

Harry came with us to the door. After standard leave takings, he said to me, "Come back again, soon. I'd like it very much." The level, looking-through eyes sustained the quiet, level voice.

"I'm looking forward to it," I said, not having got to the point of saying, "<u>If I live long enough</u>..."

Tall and straight, he stood there, hand raised, as we three

got into Don's car. During our backing out of the long drive he stood fast, hand still raised, in that gesture of leave taking which for the first time had real meaning for me when I set out for the war in 1917, and quit my regiment, in France, 1919... after which, I began to learn, through repeated experiencings, about farewells.

He died April 2, 1970. In my journal I wrote these concluding words: ". . . Harry's death moves me more deeply than anyone would realize. He was outstanding in the pulp world, and a very real part of my pulp years. . .I fire up three joss sticks, and I bow three times. . ."

Harry Olmsted's history makes it clear why I consider him, as I have others, more important as a human being, with his fictioneering only one of his several achievements. In this, I differ from the fan-enthusiast who worships the synthetic image which he has created, all too often in total ignorance of facts. I remember him primarily as an outstanding character, a man esteemed as a man, by other men who have lived active and diversified lives.

Eulogy? Terse: I wish I'd known him better.

E. Hoffman Price

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The biography of Tom Curry by G. M. Farley was originally published as a booklet by THE ZANE GREY COLLECTOR in 1975 and is copyrighted 1975 by G. M. Farley. It is reprinted here with permission through the kindness of G. M. Farley.

FOREWORD

When contemporary Western writers inscribe their latest books to Tom Curry they are quick to mention that he was a pioneer in the present style of Western writing. They sign their books with respect for a man who started writing before some of them were born.

With the exception of the sex story, you name it, and Tom Curry has probably written it. His very first story was a Western and the one he is currently working on is a Western -- after fifty two years. During these years he has written over twelve million words of prose.

A complete bibliography of Mr. Curry's published articles and stories will probably never be compiled, because he wrote under several pseudonyms -- and still does. He did not keep records of the stories sold nor copies of the magazines in which

they appeared. Nearly all of the magazines he did have were given to the University of Oregon, along with many original manuscripts and letters.

Tom is a remarkable man, an inspiring man to be around. I would like you to meet him.

So get down, tie up your horse, and let's spend the afternoon with Mr. Thomas Albert Curry, Jr., one of America's great Western writers.

G. M. Farley

TOM CURRY

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Tom states very frankly that if his first attempt at serious writing had not sold he probably never would have become a writer. Exactly what prompted him to write his first story, amidst the busy classes at Columbia College is hard to say. It may have been, as Tom has hinted, jealousy. His father had sold some stories and a play, JUST THE SAME AS NOW, to David Belasco, a famous producer, and his mother had also sold a couple. Tom's sister, an actress, married an author, F. R. Buckley. Impressed by his brother-in-law's success, young Tom Curry decided to try his hand.

His first story, "Diamond in the Rough", appeared in PEOPLE'S FAVORITE, March, 1921. Mr. A. L. Sessions sent Tom a check for $25 for the story. The young man was elated, "crazy with joy" as he described the experience. Cashing the check, he went to Ziegfield's Midnight Frolic and squandered it all. Then he sat down to write another story.

This was not the way Tom had planned his life. He wanted a career in engineering.

Tom Curry was ushered into this life November 4, 1900, vociferously lamenting the fact that he was too late to witness the advent of the Twentieth Century. This phase passed almost immediately, and he became involved in the tedious process of growing up.

He was born on Retreat Avenue, which he calls Asylum Street, Hartford, Connecticut. After two and a half years they moved to Buffalo, New York and then to Syracuse. When Tom was 10 they moved to Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, and when he was 14, they moved to New York City.

Thomas A. Curry, Sr. married Sarah Jefferis, daughter of Daniel W. Jefferis, a Civil War surgeon, and later a famous surgeon in Chester, Pennsylvania. The elder Thomas Curry was first an actor, then an advertising manager, and later general manager for David Belasco. He wrote stories and plays as a

sideline.

Young Tom Curry liked to hunt and fish, and would shoot almost anything opportunity afforded. There was school in the winter, and the summer seasons were always to short; and then he was through high school with some responsibilities to share. In the summer he worked at Pocono Lake Preserve, Pennsylvania driving cars and trucks and doing the necessary maintenance. He drove passengers to and from the railroad station, was laundryman, milkman, and a little of everything.

In 1918, just before his 18th birthday, he enrolled at Columbia College, New York City. He intended to become a chemical engineer. The course required six years for a degree. Writers and artists, it has been said, are born, not made, and Tom had inherited the gift and the urge to write. He studied hard, determined to be successful in his chosen field, but in the back of his mind was the haunting question, "Can I write a saleable story?"

And so it came to pass in 1921 that Tom Curry submitted his first effort, and opened the door to a new and different life.

Tom had a keenly developed sense of humor that has not diminished with his years. It shows a litle in his conversation, but his letters are filled with it, and he has published many humerous stories and articles. An example of this is his imaginary account of how he sold his first story:

"I wrote till my tongue protruded and couldn't sell. So I was really infuriated."

"My brother-in-law was not only a writer, but a gun expert and collector of weapons. He had an old Frontier Model Colt; it wouldn't shoot, but it looked formidable. So here's my confession: I wrote a short western, hid the Colt under my jacket, and called on an editor. I laid the story on his desk, and as he began shaking his head because he didn't even like the first paragraph, I pulled the hoglog and stuck it against the back of his skull. 'I don't want to kill you sir," I said cooly. 'But so help me, if you don't buy this, I'll do it. No use to call the sheriff. I'll be in hiding till I receive your payment.'"

"He swallowed his adam's apple and with shaking hand reached for his phone. I rammed the colt into his neck. 'What d'you think you're doing?' I snarled. "just...just calling our financial department to issue you a check,' he quavered. 'I think this is the best story I'm ever going to read.'"

"So that's how I sold my first, and instead of becoming a respectable, upstanding member of the community, an engineer, I have been a member of that shady, shifty Wild Bunch, a writer. For 50 years!

"Reading the above reminds me of the old ditty, 'How Could You Believe Me When I Said I Loved You When You Know I've Been A Liar All My Life?'

"Sessions paid me $25 for the first one but it looked like a million, and a rosy, easy (?) life swam before my eyes. It was a week before I came down from the ceiling."

It was during his college years that Tom met his future wife. They were at a football game, and his friend introduced him to a lovely blonde with beautiful brown eyes. Tom was smitten with Louise Moore and immediately laid plans to relieve his friend of his social obligations. Louise thought Tom was "cute" and did not turn a deaf ear to his entreaties. Tom had an advantage, being a writer, and among the various subterfuges employed were stories -- lies to be exact -- that lured Louise away from her former boyfriend.

Whether or not Tom made an enemy is difficult to say, but love seldom considers the consequences. All is fair, and Tom believed it and acted accordingly. He won the hand of the fair maiden.

He continued to write and sell stories and novelettes. His name appeared in more and more magazines, and often on the cover of some. While there was a good market for Westerns, Tom's gifted imagination reached into other fields. And his quest for adventure and knowledge took him to strange and sometimes exotic places.

Although Tom's knowledge of the West comes chiefly from research and a remarkable memory, plus a few short trips to the vanishing frontier, he did base some of his adventure stories on his own experiences.

About 1930, he decided to go in search of new material. He booked passage on "a battered old wreck of a ship" for the Caribbean and South America. The story is best told in Tom's own words:

"A fly-by-night American outfit diddled a mail contract and started making the run, stopping at every islet all the way down. It had a ten-degree shiplist due to being wrecked. Twenty fours out of New York City, a 60-mile nor'easter began blowing. It was a quarter sea on our stern and pushed the ship over on the list side."

"Around Cape Hatteras, a fuel port sprung, a la vestris. The crew was green and the officers didn't dare tell them; so the petty officers and such went into the filthy bilges and finally got the port closed, though she had taken on so much

water she nearly had it. The storm took us all the way to St. Thomas."

"We paused at St. Kitts, Antigua, Martinique, St. Lucia, Grenada, to Trinidad and along the coast (of South America) to the Guineas, picking up freight or unloading, some deck passengers such as field hands going from one isle to another to work the sugar cane fields. We had cabin passengers, too, black and white, and freight."

"It was during prohibition. When we hit the British islands, the crew (and passengers, myself included, I am sad to say) bought plenty liquor. You could have trailed us on the sea by floating empty bottles. One dinner hour a big black steward waiting on the Captain was very drunk. The Cap'n said, 'I asked you three times to bring me some peaches!' The steward said, 'You only think you asked me --- you!' The Captain jumped up, went to his cabin and got his revolver. The third mate was also armed. They arrested the steward.

"They had no brig. The ship was so big it had a roundhouse instead of a flying bridge, and they kept the prisoner in the roundhouse under the eyes of the officers in charge and the helmsman. The other blacks had a meeting, went up to the Captain's quarters and said if he didn't release the prisoner they wouldn't work... this was on the high seas, on the run east to Barbados. So it was a technical mutiny. The Captain let the steward go. The steward celebrated by getting crazy drunk on gin, took off all his clothes, and ran around the ship, screaming and threatening people with a butcher knife. So his pals turned on him and he was kept prisoner throughout the voyage."

"We went aground in the Demerara River. The ship drew 19 feet, and the river was only 17 feet. They managed to plow through the yellow goo. The food was bad. I had a poor time of it."

"On the way home we cracked a boiler but managed to reach Antigua. A portable welding outfit was brought out on a barge and the boiler patched up. About 50 miles from New York City, just as I thought I was home free, a 125-mile-an-hour tornado hit us on the bow but we got through. (That was the freak twister that some stones off Trinity Church steeple). ---This shipping company didn't last long."

So when Tom Curry wrote adventure stories, he was often writing of places he had been and of things he had experienced.

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Tom and Louise were married March 18, 1926. By this time Tom was an established writer, appearing in many of the hundreds of magazines then on the market, and so there was no problem

about settling down in any particular location. They spent their summer in the Buckley home in Norwalk, Connecticut, while the Buckley's were in Europe. Then they spent six months in a coral cottage in Bermuda. Tom continued earning a living with his typewriter. From the islands they went to Westport, Connecticut and later bought a home in Weston, Connecticut. The couple remained there four years, before moving to Seabright, New Jersey.

In 1931 Tom's sister, the wife of F. R. Buckley, died suddenly, and her husband decided to return to England. The Curry's took eight-year-old Faith Buckley to raise and moved into the Buckley home, which they later purchased and still own. They had two sons of their own, Stephen J., and Thomas 3rd. Thomas died in 1946 at the age of 9. The living son is now a professor of English and has a Ph. D. degree. He teaches in a college in western Pennsylvania.

Always a lover of sports, Tom was a member of the varsity water-polo team at Columbia and has never lost his love of swimming. Tome and Louise still spend nearly every summer afternoon at the beach. For 20 years he played tennis during the summer months, and during those two decades was equally well known on Norwalk and Westport tennis courts as a star competitor During the 1930s, he and Bob Carse, who was also a well-known local fiction writer, climaxed a winning season by taking the men's doubles championship in the Westport Invitation Tennis Tournament. During the winter months, he performed on the badminton courts. Now he plays ping-pong, a game at which he excells.

Before his marriage, when he was 23, Tom accepted a job as crime reporter for the old New York American, working from 6pm to 3am.

"I got to know a number of police detectives, often accompanying them when they went out to make investigations or arrests," he recalls. "I was on a first name basis with the police on the nightshift beats. It was heady stuff for a youth, constantly making the rounds of the various police precincts, but I soon quit.

The 1900s ushered in the golden era of the pulp magazines. It was a time when, in Curry's own words, "Any story that would stick together was a sure sale." Television had not been marketed. There was no air service, and automobiles and roads did not encourage a great deal of travel. People had a lot of time on their hands and so they read. Hundreds of pulp magazines filled this need. They were inexpensive -- a lot of reading material for ten cents. Tom sold to many of these publications, writing as much as 600,000 words in a single year. He also began to sell to the "slick" market.

Tom's favorite editor was, and still is, Leo Margulies.

During the hey-day of the pulps Mr. Margulies published as many as forty magazines at one time. In 1939, Margulies asked Tom to help with a problem. He wanted to publish a new type western and needed a super-hero for the lead novels. Tom went to work on the project and came up with the Rio Kid, and in October, 1939 THE RIO KID WESTERN was born. It featured a former Civil War captain by the name of Bob Pryor, and a horse with a super abundance of horse sense. In fact, the horse is almost human at times. Pryor sets out to rid the West of undesirable characters with considerable success. The character became quite popular with Western fans, and in 1972 again caught favor with the public in a series of Rio Kid paperback editions. They are reprints of the magazine yarns. Every other Rio Kid story to appear was written by Tom Curry.

"I felt I was a free-lance writer at heart...During the 1920s the fiction field was flourishing...Vigorously thriving... with a steady, ever-flowing source of material that was being readily consumed by dozens of publishers, both hardcover, paperback and magazine. I wrote a number of detective stories, and BLACK MASK MAGAZINE bought one. Soon I became one of editor Joe Shaw's regular contributors and my name began appearing in distinguished company -- Dasheill Hammett and Earle Stanley Gardner being among the many authors writing for Shaw at the time.

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Some of the magazines Tom Curry's by-line appeared in were Argosy, G-Men, Popular Western, Detective Fiction, Rio Kid Western, Thrilling Western, Range Riders, Texas Rangers, Clues, The Elks, McClures, Sea Stories, Liberty, Smart Set, American Magazine, Short Stories, Youth's Companion and Peoples, and today is a regular contributor to Zane Grey Western Magazine. Altogether he sold to more than 300 different magazines.

Not all of Tom's writings appeared under his own name. Besides his own pseudonyms, he wrote under such house-names as Jackson Cole. (A house-name is a pen name used by a publisher to cover stories written by various authors.) From 1936 to 1950 Tom wrote 85 of the lead stories for Texas Rangers Magazine, under the name Jackson Cole. It isn't likely that the exact titles will ever be sorted out. Recently he sold a "Walt Slade" Western which appeared under the by-line Bradford Scott, a pen name of Leslie Scott.

The first hardcover book to appear by Tom Curry was not a western. The title was MURDER CHAINS and was published in 1926. The following year another murder mystery appeared entitled UNDER COVER. It was ten years before another book was published, another mystery under the by-line John Benton, The title was DUANE OF THE FBI.Finally, in 1938, the first of a long line of Westerns appeared. It was called HATE ALONG THE RIO, and was actually a reprint of a story which had appeared in one of the

pulps.

Tom made an agreement with Leo Margulies whereby he could resell the Rio Kid stories to book publishers providing the name of the character was changed. In the books the Rio Kid became Captain Mesquite.

Today Tom Curry doesn't work as hard as he once did. He writes at a small desk in the corner of an upstairs room, and he only writes when there is a market. With the surge of interest in filth literature and X-rated movies, the market for Western stories almost crashed. So Tom swims, plays ping-pong, and indulges in his love for corresponding with friends. But there was a time when he was an exceedingly busy man, so busy in fact that he could not find time to visit the newsstands to buy copies of magazines with his stories.

The Curry's live in a 200 year-old house in which they take justifiable pride. When their children were young, the noise was too distracting for Tom so he built a studio on the back of his property, away from domestic disturbances. Here he spent his mornings and sometimes long hours at his typewriter turning out the thousands of exciting words that thrilled the American public. He wrote an average of 600,000 words a year for twenty years until he finally felt that he was literally "burned out." Even then he did not stop until June of 1961 when he took a job with Dorr-Oliver, Inc.

Finally Tom had an opportunity to fulfill the job for which he had studied at Columbia College. He was employed at their Research and Testing Laboratory in Westport, Conn. as accountant, buyer of chemicals and all supplies, and a customs broker for the company. He was happy at this kind of work, but when he retired from Dorr-Oliver, it was to return to his typewriter. In fact, he continued to write an occassional story even while spending five days a week at Dorr-Oliver.

Action, Tom says, is his forte, and especially Western action.

"I have had phenomenal luck with Westerns," Tom once wrote. "Sold all I have written. You may strike me dead if I am lying."

There is certainly no reason not to believe this statement by the man whose by-lined has graced the covers of hundreds of magazines, and who is still selling Western novels and novelettes long after TV tomahawked the market for general magazine fiction. In the early part of 1972 a paperback publisher began reissuing the Rio Kid series in book form.

Publisher Leo Margulies said recently, "Tom Curry is one of the least publicized of all Western writers."

This is true, and it is probably due to the fact that Tom has never been a publicity seeker. It matters little to him what by-line is on one of his stories. He has never sought for fame. He only wanted to make a living for his family. Today his stories are still appearing under half a dozen or more pseudonyms. He has used such pen-names as John Benton, Jeff Jeffries, Jackson Cole, and others.

It was Tom's idea to iclude real western heroes and badmen in the Rio Kid series. This, quite naturally, required a lot of study and research, but it gave the author a remarkable knowledge of western characters. The final outcome of this was a book entitled FAMOUS FIGURES OF THE OLD WEST. It has brief biographical sketches, plus drawings of the characters by Wood Cowan, of 60 heroes and villians of the Western Frontier, a real treasure trove of information for writers and persons interested in the Old West.

Of all the characters he invented "One of my all-time favorites has to be the Rio Kid. Of course I'm very fond of all of them."

Asked what ingredients were required for a hero in the pulp magazines, Tom replied, "The general theme must be that the hero, being young, handsome, strong, personable, and being endowed with great moral courage and character, as well as being an expert shot, fist-fighter, cowpuncher and rider, must, in willingly facing the most hazardous missions, track down, confront and defeat the villian in violent physical combat...And like all romantic adventure stories, these yarns must have a happy ending, as far as the hero is concerned, that is."

This has pretty well been the formula for heroes ever since the Biblical account of David's encounter with the giant Goliath

A fine example of Tom Curry's unique sense of humor can be excerpted from a letter written in May 1971.

"Am still painting. Just did a stairway, walls and ceiling and steps, then two bedroom floors. On the floor used a color called 'patio red.'

"Well, suh, my method of painting is notorious. I get more on myself than on what I'm painting, particularly ceilings. Anyhow, I was covered with RED paint, hands, face, clothes, etc., when the telephone downstairs began ringing. I started toward the front stairs, then remembered I'd just painted them, so turned and went back, hustling, nearly breaking my leg, down the other staircase and picked up the phone."

"A strange voice, impelling, almost menacing, said, 'Thomas

Albert Curry, Junior?' I said, 'Yes sir.' The voice said, 'I understand you have been taking my name in vain.'

"What do you mean by that?" I inquired.

"He gave a laugh, a sinister, evil chuckle is the only way I can describe it. It gave me the shivers. 'We have 40 million gallons of fresh crimson paint waiting for you, Thomas,' he said. 'Our walls are of infinate height and width, no end to them, no way out. The paint is not Latex which may wash off with H2O, even if you could get any water down here.'

"By now I was shaking violently. 'I -- I was hoping maybe -- maybe -- gold leaf, pink, cherubim floating around to give a hand....'

"Again that horrible laugh."

"I was stupefied."

"Isn't there anything I can do?" I quavered.

"Learn to paint faster and enjoy wearing an asbestos suit."

"With another demoniacal chuckle, he hung up on me."

Sometimes this wry humor creeps into Tom's stories and articles, but more often he relegates it to his letters. Another example was a reference to his ability to sing. He was discussing a certain opera when he wrote:

"I used to render (render: to tear apart, rip asunder) Thais in song, accompanying myself on the guitar or banjo, and entertained publicly, a good deal. But I have reformed, so have no fear."

"Also, in my repertoire were the other Opera Guyed items, 'Samson and Delila,' 'La Traviata,' and 'Die Walkure.' And Lewis Carroll's 'Walrus and the Carpenter,' besides my shorter singsongs."

When the Albert Einstein postage stamp was issued, Tom added a postscript to a letter:

"As to the drinking, please note the stamp on this letter. I am known as 'Ein Stein Curry,' not because I am so smart but because I will take only one drink."

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With this sense of humor to keep him youthful in spirit, Tom could be thrilling us for a long time to come with his yarns of the Old West, and factual articles about the men and women who made the West what it was. G. M. FARLEY

The following article is reprinted from ON PULPS & SUCH an apazine I used for PEAPS. I decided it would fit very well into this Western theme issue of the "new series" THE PULP ERA.

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BUCK JONES WESTERN STORIES

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I realize that PEAPS members will now have to read this twice or just ignore it, but felt that all of the others who subscribe to the PULP ERA would be interested in --- so --- BUCK Jones Western Stories is our subject for this article.

A Dell publication , Volume one Number one was dated Nov. 1936. The contents were as follows:

GREETINGS FROM THE RANGE.....BUCK JONES 8
A personal message from the world's greatest Western movie star.

GALLANT RIDER (A Complete Novel).....Galen C. Colin 12
A message in blood sent Lightnin' Burch into Doom Valley. Although he was a man of peace, it was a case of fight fire with fire. Could Lightnin' right the wrongs Jug Blodgett's gang of murders had done----or would he be just another target for Outlaw bullets?

A KILLER'S CODE.....KENNETH L. SINCLAIR 37
All men despised him because he was an outlaw's son, but Calvin Rane learned that riding a trail of vengeance was not the road to honor.

DEPUTY OF SALADO.....SAM H. NICKELS 47
When Smokey Munson's killers tried to make Slue-Foot Cassidy dance to colt music, they found that flaming lead was slow compared to the lean deputy's fists.

THE BOSS RIDER OF GUN CREEK.....DONALD G. COOLEY 66
The story of Buck Jones' newest film.

JAILBIRD BROTHER (A Novelette).....Victor Kaufman 68
Steve Brand knew what it meant to be outside the law. It was up to him to prove his innocence but, even at the cost of his own good name, could he prevent his kid brother from making a fatal mistake?

BUCK JONES----WESTERN COWBOY.....83
A short biography of this greatest of western stars.

OUT OF HELL----BY SATAN.....CLINTON DANGERFIELD 87

The kindness of an understanding man tamed the wild stallion----the brutality of another turned the animal into a juggernaut of death.

TEXAS RANGER.....EDD EARL REPP 98
Because of his indomitable courage and his unrivalled gun skill, Captain Bill McDonald became the greatest outlaw-buster in Texas.

COVER PORTRAIT BY SIDNEY RIESENBERG

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The Sidney Riesenberg cover was a thing of beauty and I would almost kill to have it in my collection. Ghod only knows what happened to it. Many of the pulp covers were ash-canned. Ask Sam Moskowitz. He got many Paul covers out of the garbage can in the alley behind the Gernsback offices.

GREETINGS FROM THE RANGE!

The Idol Of Millions Of American Boys Sends You This Message

When a fellow's young he thinks there is nothing like adventure. He wants to get out and do things, and like as not, what he wants to do is be a cowboy. There's something about the free and easy trade of the range rider that catches the imagination of any boy with red blood in his veins, and he wants to get out on the prairie astride a galloping cayuse and bulldog steers and shoot Indians. I know that was the way it was with me when I was a boy.

My folks were living in Vincennes, Indiana, when I was born. If you know your history, you will remember that Vincennes is a town where the Americans and the British with their Indian allies had a big battle in the Revolutionary War. The Americans won and by their victory opened the Western country to the pioneers who later built the cattle business and gave the cowboy his job. So I guess the adventure and pioneer spirit was just sort of bred in my blood.

However, I don't remember much about Vincennces. My people moved to Oklahoma when I was only a few months old and I grew up on a ranch there. I learned to rope and ride when I was just a kid and became a regular ranch hand. Still, that wasn't enough adventure for me so I joined the U.S. Cavalry. I rode patrol on the Mexican border, then I went to the Philippines and got myself shot up by the Moros. I came back, flew airplanes, broke in racing cars, busted broncos and did a lot of riding for Wild West shows before I got married and became a movie cowboy.

So you can see that I know what I'm talking about when I say that the modern boy has it all over us grownups when it comes to the thrills of adventure. We had to go out and get our the hard way.

There were no movies out my way when I was a boy. Nowadays, the modern boy can get all the thrills we did by paying a quarter for a seat in the movies. And to take the word of one who has been through the mill, this is far and away the best method of getting the thrills out of cowboy adventures.

For real cowboy work, whether you are riding herd on a ranch outfit or doing your stuff in the movies, is a lot of hard work and mighty little romance. You have to break in wild horses. Yes, we have them just as rambunctious in Hollywood as in the corrals of Oklahoma or Texas. This horse wrangling is dangerous business. The chances are that you are going to get thrown. When a kicking bronc rolls on you it's more than likely that you are going to come up with a couple of ribs cracked, if you are able to get up at all. The big roweled spurs catch in the stirrups and many a good man has been dragged that way over the rough prairie 'til he's been all battered up and ready for a hospital cot.

Carrying a gun, part of every cowpuncher's outfit, is dangerous too. Even when you have become an expert at slinging your hardware, you are liable to get shot in the foot when you draw your gun and it jams.

Even though you may be lucky and escape being thrown or shot, just riding, the way a cowboy has to do it, sometimes all day from sunup to sundown, is plenty punishing. Any young fellow who tries it will have to eat many a supper from the mantlepiece, he'll be that sore.

So it's much better fun having your adventure on the open range from a seat in a movie house than from a seat in the saddle.

Making buckaroo film dramas is just as hard work as riding the line, rounding up stock and branding the little "dogies" ever was in the palmy days of the open range. Of course, it pays a lot better, but it's a racket exclusively for tough hombres that can take it. I've done both kinds of work and I know. Take a location trip we made not long ago to get an idea of what I mean; we made it while we were working on my latest Universal picture, "Ride 'Em, Cowboy."

Our outfit left Universal City to shoot scenes at Lone Pine, California. Lone Pine is 226 miles from the studio gates. We started at six o'clock in the evening and rode all night. By six the next morning we were at Lone Pine. We ate a heavy cowboy breakfast of thick steak, hashed-brown potatoes, plenty of bisquits and brown gravy, cooked in Dutch ovens in hot coals

right on the open plains. Then we went to work. Before sundown we had shot sixty-eight scenes, many of them calling for trick riding, rough and tumble fights and gunplay. Then an all-night ride back again. By eight o'clock the next morning we were acting away on top of a big mesa (that is a sort of high table land or plateau) fifty miles from the studio in the San Fernando Valley.

For hard, driving work of this kind a man has to be in shape. I have to train all the time just as if I were a boxer or a wrestler to make the old muscles hard and yet supple. A lot in keeping fit for these outdoor adventure pictures depends on what a fellow eats. I never diet. I eat regular fighter's training table grub; plenty of porterhouse and tenderloin steaks, potatoes and green vegetables.

Breakfast to me, means ham and eggs, coffee and hot cakes. Sometimes my wife roasts us a turkey or a duck -- duck, preferably, cooked rare. Yet I never take on weight with all this heavy food. Acting, producing and often writing movies that keep me in the saddle two-thirds of the year boils off the fat and I'm usually trained so that I can swing aboard a horse for a stretch of sixteen-hour acting days at a minute's notice.

So don't any of you fellows come out to Hollywood for the adventure of a job as a movie cowboy, thinking it's something like escorting pretty girls around a dude ranch.

My business is to make cowboy pictures just as real as I can and true to life as I know it is lived on the range -- and everywhere else, for that matter. At the same time I try to drive home a lesson of good living with every film I make. I've seen a lot of rough life, knocking about the world with hard boiled horse wranglers, frontier marshals and bad men, tough citizens in Uncle Sam's regular army and under canvas with the wild crews of many circuses and wild west shows. I know from actual experience that there is a heap of bad in the world. I know that the good people and things of life are good only because they are contrasted with this evil.

For this reason there are any number of bad hombres in my pictures. But they are always beaten before the picture comes to its close. That may seem like a goody-good, psalm-singing way of doing things, but it's been the way I've seen things happen in real life. I never saw a gun-slinging bad man of the frontier towns who didn't get what he was looking for from some marshal's six-shooter sooner or later. Read the newspapers any day and the same fact can be noticed in the careers of city criminals. One by one they are rounded up by the local authorities and the G-men.

Another thing: since my pictures reach more boys than any other kind of films, I try to build my own parts so that I do what is fair and square and what any manly boy would want to do

if he were in my place. Although I must admit that I shot many a head hunter in the Philippine jungles when I was in the army, I never shot a man in a moving picture. I don't like gun fighting. I believe the way kids like to see bullies put out of action is with a good right to the jaw and that is the way I do it on the screen. I never pull a gun in a picture if I can help it, but if the plot demands that I draw, I never go for my weapon before the other fellow does.

And that is not politeness. It is just the code of fair play the fans demand. And don't think beating a man to the punch instead of beating him to the draw is something that was never done in the palmy days of the Wild West. Fiction writers have put so much stress on the fellow with the lightning-fast gun hand, that youngsters imagine the cowboy never used his fists. That isn't so. The best marshal Dodge City ever had, when it was the wildest town in America, was Pat Smith. Smith never carried a gun. He used only his fists and knocked the worst bad men in the cattle land cold and dragged them to the town jail to cool off some more.

Another thing I'm very careful about when I set out to turn a script into a western film is the way the hero treats his horse. I believe you can tell a lot about humans from the way they treat dumb animals. I never saw a man or a woman who was cruel to beasts who amounted to shucks, and I want to get that home to every boy who sees my pictures. I know horses, and in all my productions I treat them just as I would in real life. The horse I ride, Silver, belongs to me and I never call on him to do anything that puts any cruel strain on him or that a cowboy out on the range would hesitate to call on his mount to do in the same circumstances.

There is mighty little love interest in my pictures. I figure we don't need it. Even when the frontier towns were running wide open, the cowboy was a woman-shy man. I aim to give he-man adventure in my screen plays, with the love affairs of the hero limited to a very respectful courtship of one girl. That is true to cowboy life. Furthermore I will not allow anything censorable in my pictures. I have a daughter of my own and I won't let anything in a Buck Jones production that I wouldn't want her to see on the screen.

I never take a drink when I'm playing a Western hero role, and I never smoke a cigarette. My prime reason for doing this is because I want to give young fellows the idea that they can be just as manly if they never smoke or drink. I know that the frontier hero of fiction is mostly shown as smoking one cigarette after the other while standing up to the bar and downing thimblefuls of red eye. But I know that many a dead shot of the West never tasted alcohol or inhaled nicotine. They had their practical reasons for this. The bad men and the peace officers alike were abstainers because they needed cool nerves, and booze and tobacco made them shaky.

Likewise I always try to dress the way a real cowboy does when he goes about his daily work. All this fancy business of white sombreros and skin tight breeches is out with me. That goes all right in a circus, but no cow waddy ever wore an outfit like that, and I'm not going to fool my fans by wearing it either.

You know there is a practical, workaday reason for every part of the cowpuncher's picturesque costume. The Montana rider will wear his Stetson creased in the crown and the brim rolled to drain off the snow and rain he encounters in that cold state.Cowboys from Arizona leave their hat crowns dentless and high to allow air to circulate inside and cool them under the desert heat.

We check our pictures constantly for accuracy costume and equipment details. We have to, for cowboys are among our most faithful Western picture fans, and they are mighty critical.

All my pictures are made up along these lines and the makeup is not accidental. I plan them that way. I buy, produce and sometimes write all my own films. Through my fan mail and my Buck Jones Rangers, with 2,000,000 members, I am in constant touch with my fans. By their favorable response, I believe that I have received a mandate from the youth of the nation to make the kind of pictures I produce. Therefore, as long as I can ride a bronc, I am going to bring this kind of Western adventure to the American boy who can't very well be a cowboy himself.

BUCK JONES

BUCK JONES ---- WESTERN COWBOY

The best loved and most popular Western star in the world today -- that's Buck Jones. In a thousand theatres in a thousand cities, Buck Jones and his horse, Silver, nightly thrill audiences with excitement as they make the Old West live again.

Tall, stalwart, handsome, a fearless rider and a matchless roper and rifleman, Buck, as he thunders across the screen, might have ridden straight out of the past. For it is just such men as he who walk the pages of the stories we all love to read, telling of the courage and the danger that went into the conquest of the West.

It is an earned position that he holds in the hearts of Americans. And earned in his place as head of the more than two million boys who are banded together as Buck Jones Rangers, and pledged to courage and strict discipline. No one living better

symbolizes the courage and manhood of the Old West -- the hunters and trappers, the Indian fighters and cowboys who made a mighty country out of a wilderness.

The scenes that Buck Jones enacts before the camera are no make-believe. He has lived them, and others even more dangerous and thrilling. Real bullets have whistled past his ears, and real outlaws lain in ambush with their rifles ready, hoping to speed a leaden slug into his heart.

From babyhood Buck was brought up on a ranch. Almost before he could walk he was riding horseback, and he could use a six-gun and a lariat at an age when most boys are just learning to read. Horses and cowboys were his companions, and his life the life of the range.

His birthplace was Vincennes, Indiana, in a region that is richly stored with lore and legend of the great days of the past. But the tide of history had moved on westward before Buck was born, and his parents found Vincennes too quiet. So his father bought a 3,000 acre ranch at Red Rock, Oklahoma, and it was here that the baby Buck grew up.

Buck's boyhood days were the kind that every boy dreams of. Horses, round-ups, roping, shooting, long days in the saddle riding herd on thousands of cattle, sleeping at night beside the chuck-wagon while the campfire burned low, with friendly cowboys for companions, teaching him all the tricks of the cowpoke -- this was the life he knew as he grew to manhood.

Horses were his first love -- as they are to this day -- and he took pride in being able to ride and rope and shoot with the best of them. Without realizing it, he was learning things that were to stand him in good stead later in life.

It wasn't play, of course. The life of the cowboy has a great deal of hard, gruelling work to it. And Buck, taking his place as a regular cowhand even as a boy, did his share of it. At round-up time he helped haze the cattle in from the hills and valleys, hunted strays, roped and branded -- and grew tough and wiry doing it.

But presently the wanderlust struck him. Even 3,000 acres was not big enough for a boy who knew every nook and cranny, every crevise and rise and water-hole on them. Buck saddled his horse, rolled his blanket, and set out to see new country.

At Bliss, Oklahoma, he met up with the famous 101 Ranch. It had many of the best topriders and cowhands of the country. Buck liked the looks of the outfit, and he stayed on for a while as cowhand. But presently he began to feel that he hadn't covered enough country yet to settle down, and he moved on.

After that he tried several occupations, and saw a lot of

country on the way. But always, he says, his love for horses drew him back where he could be near them. And eventually he found a way of combining his yearning for adventure with his love for horses. He did it by joining the United States Cavalry. Then he saw adventure with a vengeance, for Troop G, 6th U.S. Cavalry -- Buck's hard-riding outfit -- was assigned to patrol duty along the turbulent miles of the Mexican border.

Revolutionists, smugglers, and assorted outlaws from all over the West kept the Border patrol busy maintaining law and order. The horsemanship and marksmanship Buck had learned as a boy came into good use in hard-riding night forays with smugglers trying to run cattle and contraband across the shallow waters of the Rio Grande. Long dusty days in the saddle, beneath a desert sun, while thr troop rode the interminable miles where Mexico and the United States meet, tried his endurance to the limit.

The occasional hiss of an angry bullet past his head, Buck says, kept things from getting too monotonous. It was no life for a weakling. But it meant horses, riding and shooting -- and adventure -- and it was the life Buck Jones, like many another boy before and since, had always dreamed of.

About the time he was beginning to think he had tasted all the thrills which the Border Patrol had to offer, new opportunity for adventure came his way. Troop G was ordered to the Philippines.

The Philippines then were a new possession of Uncle Sam's. And they were wild. In the tropic fastness of the jungles that covered the many islands lurked the Moros, as shifty, cunning, savage, and cruel fighters as any in the world.

In ambush they waited for white men who came to tame them, and with crude rifles and poison darts they swarmed from hiding when their prey was safely in their grasp. At other times, by dead of night, they might creep upon a waiting sentry, and without making a sound leave him dead with a knife in his back.

It was no easy task that was set for the American soldiers who had to subjugate such fierce opponents and bring them to respect law and order. Patroling the jungle trails amidst the steaming tropic heat, surrounded by enemies both animal and human, was no child's play, as Buck quickly found. More than one of his troop stopped a deadly arrow, loosed silently from a seemingly impenetrable wall of foliage. And more than one was found in the morning, facing the sky with a knife in his heart -- dead in the line of duty.

But Buck escaped unscathed, and was advanced to a top-sergeant. Then came the order that sent him, in company with a lieutenant and a band of men, into the interior of the island of Mindanao, where a gang of Moro bandits had holed up in a

jungle hide-out. Led by native guides, the soldiers made their way down the jungle trails with ever watchful gaze seeking the first sign of the enemy. Their first warning that they were near their prey was a sudden volley of shots, poured into them from hiding.

Buck went down. A crude slug from the gun of a savage bushwhacker had shattered his hip.

For a while they thought he would lose his leg. And when it was saved, still Buck was afraid he was going to be a cripple for life. The existence that stretched ahead was a bleak prospect. No more horses! No more riding! Roundups and rodeos, the open range and the feel of a horse between his knees -- all would be barred to him. But a sturdy constitution combined with an almost miraculous recovery to make his wounded leg as good as ever.

In the meantime, however, while he waited for nature to repair his damaged bones, Buck turned to an interest in motors. He had himself transferred to the newly organized aviation squadron and gained the rating of a first-class mechanic. He worked on many of the early "kites" that were the forerunners of today's splendid planes, and he soloed in a number of them.

When Buck had regained his health, he turned to horses again. With his ability as an expert rider and roper, he turned naturally to the life of a showman.

Packing the bagful of medals for sharpshooting and marksmanship he had earned while in the army, he made his way back to the 101 Ranch. Here he was signed up as a bronco rider and trick roper with the 101 Ranch Wild West Show, a famous unit that toured the country, Exhibiting everywhere from tiny villages to New York City.

It was a new life, and Buck liked it. Hard, honest riding was part of the day's work, and his companions were crack horsemen from all over the world. Besides that, he was seeing sections of America that he had never been to before.

When the show arrived in New York, Buck met, for the first time, a pretty cowgirl equestrienne. Her name was Odelle Osborne and, since she was attracted to him as strongly as he was to her, it was not long before they were married.

Now Buck felt that it was time to leave the show business, and settle down. So for a while he tried it. Being an expert with motors of all kinds -- the result of his service with the 1st Air Squadron -- Buck took a job with a garage near Indianapolis. There he spent much time with Eddie Rickenbacker, who was later to become a famous war ace, experimenting with racing motors. But this palled upom him in time, and a new job -- one working with horses -- came eventually to his attention.

It was war time, and the armies of the Allies engaged in the great struggle were in desperate need of horses. America had the horses, thousands of them, roaming the western plains and hills, many of them half-wild and nearly untamable. And top-notch horsemen were urgently needed to break and tame these unruly broncs.

Buck Jones answered the call. He became one of the riders who inspected the thousands of steeds that were shipped into Chicago from all over the West, and then trained those that were chosen. Day after day he worked with the savage, suspicious mounts, gentling them, taming them, until, when they left his hands, they were ready to creditably do their parts in the crack foriegn cavalry units that needed them so badly. The unit he was working with disbanded eventually, however, and Buck and his wife decided to have another try at the show business. It was almost the only occupation left now that could use men with his varied accomplishments. And it offered its own spice of danger, for every time a man appeared before a thrilled and cheering crowd on board a bronc wickedly bucking and sunfishing, he was taking his life in his hands.

Lamentably true was the fact that the West Buck had known, and in whose traditions he had been brought up, was passing. The day of the automobile and the airplane was underway, and that of the pioneers who blazed their way across the West was just a glamorous memory.

But Buck did his best to make the old days live again, in his stirring exhibitions of horsemanship, roping, shooting, bulldogging and the other accomplishments of the cowboy that he gave under canvas for he crowds who came to marvel and applaud. After playing with several Wild West shows, he organized one of his own for a time. Later he and his wife joined up with "the greatest show on earth" -- the Ringling Brothers circus.

But the life of a traveling Wild West show rider was not all fun. There were many lean days, especially when Buck was stranded in Chicago without money while he awaited the arrival of the Ringling Brothers circus. That time he had to sell his chaps and equipment to eat. And it was with incidents such as this in mind that he decided, finally, to leave the circus in California. There was soon to be a Buck Jones, jr., or, perhaps, a Miss Jones, and Buck knew that the time had come to give up his far-wandering existence.

It was after he had settled in California that Buck was introduced to a new business -- the movies, in which now, as one of Universal's biggest stars, he is so famous. In no time at all Buck Jones was portaying the life he knew and loved -- the life of the horseman and the open range.

The pictures he makes for Universal Films are shown on

every continent; his reckless daring and courage are as well known to the Chinese and African children as they are to the two million American youths who are enlisted in the proud ranks of the Buck Jones Rangers.

And in the moving pictures, Buck says, he has found the work he loves best. He has a happy family, and a small ranch. He keeps for riding, four magnificent thoroughbreds, led by "Silver", the horse that has become famous with him.

And for the American boys and girls -- and adults too -- whose greatest pleasure is to read stories of the West, of cowboys and their hard-riding courage, Buck brings the tales they read to life. That, he says, gives him his greatest happiness. But what he does not say, though we can say it for him, is that he is proudest of the fact that millions of American boys are able to look up to him as worthy of being their model and their leader. And they could have no finer chief. For Buck Jones is a symbol of the best of the West that was -- the hard-riding, clean-living cowboy who conquered and tamed the plains.

When BUCK JONES WESTERN STORIES came out in 1936, I was a 10 year old boy. Buck Jones was my favorite western star, I owned a Daisy "Buck Jones" pump action B-B gun and went to every Buck Jones western that came out. So you know why this magazine is one of my favorites. I also have a couple of other Buck Jones items in the room that were given to me by my good friend Jack Daves. A Buck Jones comic book [1953], and on the wall, a movie poster, Buck Jones in "Stone of Silver Creek". Jack is also a GREAT fan of Buck Jones. Following is a complete listing of all of the Buck Jones movies.

Some of the early movies in this list, he was either an unbilled player or in a supporting role. In some of the Fox films he was billed as Charles Jones.

Western Blood (Fox, 1918). True Blue (Fox, 1918). Riders of the Purple Sage (Fox, 1918). The Rainbow Trail (Fox, 1918). The Pitfalls of a Big City (Fox, 1918). Speed Maniac (Fox, 1919). Brother Bill (Canyon, 1920). Uphill Climb (Canyon, 1920). Desert Rat (Canyon 1920). The Two Doyles (Canyon, 1920). The Last Straw (Fox, 1920, this was Buck's first starring role). Forbidden Trails (Fox, 1920). Square Shooter (Fox, 1920). Firebrand Trevision (Fox, 1920). Sunset Sprague (Fox, 1920). Just Pals (Fox, 1920). Two Moons (Fox, 1920). The Big Punch (Fox, 1921). One Man Trail (Fox, 1921). Get Your Man (Fox, 1921). Straight From the Shoulder (Fox, 1921). To a Finish (Fox, 1921). Bar Nothing (Fox, 1921). Riding With Death (Fox, 1921). Pardon My Nerve (Fox, 1922). Western Speed (Fox, 1922). Rough Shod (Fox, 1922). Trooper O'Neil (Fox, 1922). West of Chicago (Fox, 1922). Fast Mail (Fox, 1922). Bells of San Juan (Fox, 1922). The Boss of Camp Four (Fox, 1922). Footlight Ranger (Fox, 1923). Snow

Drift (Fox, 1923). Skid Proof (Fox, 1923). The Eleventh Hour (Fox, 1923). Second Hand Love (Fox, 1923). Hell's Hole (Fox, 1923). Big Dan (Fox, 1923). Cupid's Fireman (Fox, 1923). Not a Drum Was Heard (Fox, 1924). Vagabond Trail (Fox, 1924). Circus Cowboy (Fox, 1924). Western Luck (Fox, 1924). Against All Odds (Fox, 1924). Desert Outlaw (Fox, 1924). Man Who Played Square (Fox, 1924). Arizona Romeo (Fox, 1924). The Trail Rider (Fox, 1925). Gold And The Girl (Fox, 1925). Hearts and Spurs (Fox, 1925). Timber Wolf (Fox, 1925). Lazybones (Fox, 1925). Durand And The Badlands (Fox, 1925). Desert's Price (Fox, 1925). Cowboy And The Countess (Fox, 1926). The Fighting Buckaroo (Fox,1926). A Man Four Square (Fox, 1926). The Gentle Cyclone (Fox, 1926). The Flying Horseman (Fox, 1926). 30 Below Zero (Fox, 1926). Desert Valley (Fox, 1926). The War Horse (Fox, 1927). Whispering Sage (Fox, 1927). Hills Of Peril (Fox, 1927). Good As Gold (Fox, 1927). Chain Lightning (Fox, 1927). Black Jack (Fox, 1927). Blood Will Tell (Fox, 1927). Branded SombrerO (Fox, 1928). The Big Hop (Buck Jones Productions, 1928).

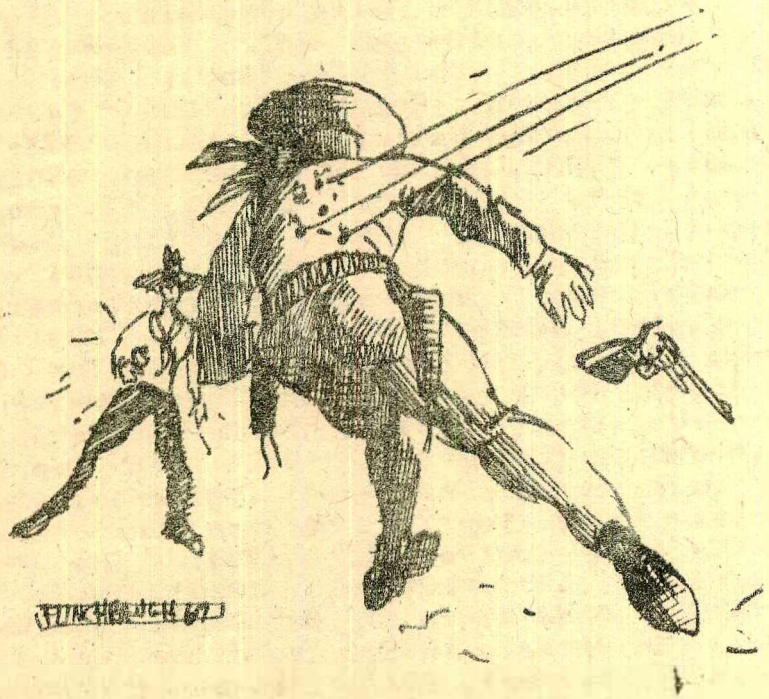
The Lone Rider (Columbia, 1930). Shadow Ranch (Columbia, 1930). Men Without Law (Columbia, 1930). The Dawn Trail (Columbia, 1930). Desert Vengeance (Columbia, 1931). The Avenger (Columbia,1931). The Texas Ranger (Columbia, 1931).The Fighting Sheriff (Columbia, 1931). Branded (Columbia, 1931). Border Law (Columbia, 1931). Range Feud (Columbia, 1931). The Deadline (Columbia, 1931). Ridin' For Justice (Columbia, 1932). One Man Law (Columbia, 1932). High Speed (Columbia, 1932). South Of The Rio Grande (Columbia,1932). Hello Trouble (Columbia, 1932). McKenna Of The Mounted (Columbia, 1932). White Eagle (Columbia, 1932). Forbidden Trail (Columbia, 1933). The Sundown Rider (Columbia, 1933). Treason (Columbia, 1933). California Trail (Columbia, 1933). Unknown Valley (Columbia, 1933). The Thrill Hunter ((Columbia, 1933). Child of Manhattan, (Columbia, 1933). Gordon of Ghost City (Universal serial, 12 chapter, 1933). Fighting Ranger (Columbia, 1934). Fighting Code (Columbia, 1934). The Man Trailer Columbia (Columbia, 1934). Rocky Rhodes (Universal, 1934). When a Man Sees Red (Universal, 1934). The Red Rider (universal serial, 15 chapters, 1934). The Roaring West (Universal serial, 15 chapters, 1935). The Crimson Trail (Universal, 1935). Stone of Silver Creek (Universal, 1935). Outlawed Guns (Universal, 1935). Border Brigands (Universal, 1936). The Throwback (Universal, 1936). The Ivory-handled Gun (Universal, 1935). Sunset of Power (Universal, 1936). Silver Spurs (Universal, 1936). For the Service (Universal, 1936). The Cowboy and the Kid (Universal, 1936). The Phantom Rider (Universal Serial, 15 chapters, 1936). Ride 'Em Cowboy (Universal, 1936). Bodd Rider of Gun Creek (Universal, 1936). Empty Saddles (Universal, 1936). Sandflow (Universal, 1937). Left-handed Law (Universal, 1937). Smoketree Range (Universal, 1937). Black Aces (Universal, 1937). Law for Tombstone (Universal, 1937). Boss of Lonely Valley (Universal, 1937). Sudden Bill Dorn (Universal, 1937). Headin' East (Columbia, 1937). Hollywood Roundup (Columbia, 1937). California Frontier (Columbia, 1938). The Overland Express (Columbia, 1938). Law of

the Texan (Columbia, 1938). Stranger From Arizona (Columbia, 1938). Unmarried (Paramount, 1939).

Wagons Westward (Republic, 1940). Riders of Death Valley (Universal Serial, 15 chapters, 1940). White Eagle (Columbia Serial, 15 chapters, 1941). Forbidden Trails (Monogram, 1941). Gunman From Bodie (Monogram, 1941). Below the Border (Monogram, 1941). Ghost Town Law (Monogram, 1942). Down Texas Way (Monogram, 1942). Riders of the West (Monogram, 1942). West of the Law (Monogram, 1942). Dawn of the Great Divide (Monogram, 1942).

Saturday November 28, 1942, Buck Jones died in a fire in Boston, Mass. He need not to have, he escaped, but went back into the raging inferno trying to save others and in doing so gave up his own life. A hero to the end!

BUCK JONES, my favorite western star, my boyhood hero, and of course, **BUCK JONES WESTERN STORIES**, my favorite western pulp magazine. Ah!! Child-hood memories!!



THE PULPS AND I

by WILKIE CONNER

I recall my first encounter with the pulps very well. It was in the early Spring of 1929. I was just past my 10th birthday and was attending school in the 4th grade in Cherryville, N.C. Just off the school grounds was an old barn. In the barn yard there was a cistern that no longer had any water in it. Through the grape-vine that small boys have, I learned that the girl who was my current "sweetheart" and two other girls went to that cistern during the lunch period to use the bathroom. Why they preferred the cistern to the school toilets is a question that has never been answered. I had recently discovered that little girl's plumbing was somewhat different than boys'. Burning with a desire to observe the difference I waited one lunch period until I saw the three heading across the school yard toward the tumble-down gate that led into the barn yard. They had their lunch baskets with them and I knew they would enjoy their lunch in the early Spring sun, then the show would come on. To keep from being observed, I went to a torn section in the rickety fence near the end of the barn that was farthest away from the cistern. I entered the barn and climbed a ladder to the loft. From a window, I could see the girls eating their lunch, sitting on the edge of the cistern and dangling their legs over the side. While waiting for the show to commence, I began exploring the loft.

In one corner was a pile of magazines. I began looking through them and discovered they were WESTERN STORIES and ACE HIGH WESTERN. (Today, I can't remember where I put the ball point pen I used half an hour ago, but this scene of 60 years ago is etched sharply in my memory.) I had never heard of a magazine that printed cowboy stories. I occasionally got a chance to go to the movies and I wouldn't go unless there was a cowboy movie on, but it had never occurred to me that such stories were available for reading. When I saw those magazines with their illustrations that seemed to come directly from a Tom Mix film, I was overjoyed. I eagerly began looking...then reading! I was so thrilled and so caught up with the excitement I'd discovered that I completely forgot my reason for being in the barn loft. Besides the excitement that might have been happening outside couldn't begin to compare with that which I had discovered inside. I was so absorbed that I didn't hear the dinner bell that ended the lunch period. When I finally noticed that all was quiet in the school yard, I hastily put my treasures aside and returned to class a half hour late. I fabricated my first piece of fiction: I told my teacher I'd sat down in the warm sun and had fallen asleep! She believed me and I didn't get the spanking with her ruler across my knuckles I so richly deserved.

I wanted those magazines badly, but I knew better than to take even one home without some reasonable explanation. Mama

would say I stold it and she had no time for thieves. I learned that as a small child when I picked up a rusty horseshoe near a community well and carried it home. She got a switch and beat me all the way back to the well and made me put the shoe back where I'd found it. Now that I was somewhat older and larger I could only imagine the hiding I'd receive if caught stealing. So I began taking the books home one at a time and fabricated my second bit of fiction: I said that a boy at school owned the books and had loaned them to me. That was accepted and I was allowed to keep and read each magazine until I read the entire stack and returned them one at a time.

I was hooked. I didn't know where nor how to get any more books, but I kept looking. One day the owner of the barn himself threw the magazines out and I took them home with me, saying the boy didn't want them anymore.

Some of my father's friends were visiting and saw the books and he said that he had some he'd trade me. I agreed eagerly and the next day he returned with several westerns, including WILD WEST WEEKLY. I had never read any stories any place as interesting as those in 3-W. That magazine began a love affair with Circle J, Kid Wolfe, Sonny Tabor and all the rest of the wonderful characters that lasted until the magazine suspended publication. A friend of mine just a few years older worked in a cotton mill --- they call them textile plants now --- and he had money. He enjoyed WWW, too, and together we worked out a scheme: He would buy the book each week out of the allowance his father gave him from his pay envelope. The book was priced at fifteen cents at that time. (Later it went to ten cents.) I could give him the five cents I received for washing dishes all week and we'd enjoy the magazines on a regular basis.

Sometime later I began selling GRIT. I could sell only 8 copies and I'd have enough to buy my own WWW. Not only that, but as my profits increased I soon began buying other magazines too. And as I talked with my customers I discovered they had many magazines I could borrow or trade for.

Naturally as I read I had a desire to write. In long hand, on school tablet paper, I wrote a western story and sent it to WILD WEST WEEKLY. It came back in a few days with a rejection slip on which was stamped: "You Didn't Enclose A Stamped, Return Envelope. Hereafter Such Contributions Will Be Destroyed If Rejected." They didn't mean it, though. I sent them another in a few weeks and received it back with an identical message on the slip.

Well, I soon discovered THE SHADOW, DOC SAVAGE, G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES, ARGOSY, and then the entire line of "Dime" magazines. By then the depression was on and most pulps sold for a dime. That dime was as hard to come by as $10.00 is today. In 1935 I began working a few days each week in a cotton mill and then I was able to fill up my room at home with all the

wonderful pulps that I'd been wanting, but wouldn't buy with the few cents I managed to accumulate, because I would have had to miss one of my favorites.

HORROR STORIES, DIME MYSTERY, THE SPIDER, WU FANG, BLUE BOOK...the list is endless. And I discovered a line of twenty five cent magazines: SAUCY STORIES, GAY PARISENNE, SPICY WESTERN, SPICY ADVENTURE and SPICY DETECTIVE. These were the "sex" magazines of their day and had such juicy words in print as "Breasts" and "Panties".

I also discovered another kind of magazine about the same time: ASTOUNDING STORIES! I'd read the BUCK ROGERS comic strips, the few science and fantasy stories in ARGOSY but here was a whole magazine of such stories. I began to devour every science fiction magazine I could buy, beg, borrow or steal.

Before World War II darkened the pulp life, I'd discovered WEIRD TALES, UNKNOWN WORLDS, THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING STORIES, AMAZING STORIES, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, PLANET STORIES, and many, many more. Some of these books survived until after the war for a few years. Television and comic books killed them. {I never did really get into comic books. I wanted to be a writer and I could see no market in them unless you lived in New York City.}

The pulps were considered trash by many. But to me they were a way of life. I still miss them. I discovered two of my best and longest friendships via the pulps: Lynn Hickman and Manly Banister. These two people alone enriched my life to the extent that I'd never known had I not met them. My years of reading the pulps would have been worth the effort even if I hadn't enjoyed them, just to have the priviledge of having known these men.

Kids today have the video games and television. In my day we had the pulps. They are gone. But praise God, they'll never be forgotten!

Wilkie Conner

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WHAT IS A PULP?

by Jerry Page

The Pulp Era Amateur Press Society requires of its members that they contribute 6 pages of original material (4 of them written) relating to the pulps, every two quarterly mailings. Because the tradition of the amateur press association, so popular in science fiction fandom, is not that familiar to pulp fans who haven't themselves been active in sf circles, the official editor has been deliberately lax in enforcing the APA's minimum activity requirements. But with six mailings published and the group stabilizing, official editor Curt Phillips has stated that he'll have to enforce the rules henceforth.

I'm sure that what he's talking about is getting the members to contribute regularly and meet deadlines, but it occurs to me that the pulps were so broad in their scope that a controversy could arise regarding what actually constitutes one of the things. Do Frank Reade Jr. and the other dime novel series constitute part of the pulp phenomena? Do current magazines like Fantasy & Science Fiction or Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine?

Now, as I've said elsewhere (and this certainly isn't original with me), I regard the pulp era as having begun in late 1896, when Frank Munsey converted Argosy to an all-fiction magazine (the October issue, according to Sam Moskowitz's "A History of the Scientific Romance in the Munsey Magazines. 1912-1920") and began using cheap pulpwood paper in it (the December issue).

This is less frivolous a choice for a starting point than it might appear: the adoption of a policy of varied fiction contents made the magazine eligible for the cheaper second-class postal rates, giving it a strong advantage over the dime novel. Further, because the paper cost less, publishers could start magazines with a smaller investment. And because the paper weighed less, the magazines could be shipped more cheaply. It now became practical to send copies of magazines just about any place in the nation.

In the 1960s, paperback publishing houses that had stood as independent businesses since the 1940s began to attract the eyes of large conglomerates who, rightly, figured they were a good investment for a company looking to both diversify and make a profit. When one of them took over Ace Books, Don Wollheim put up with it for a time before finally, in exasperation, quitting and launching his own publishing venture. When Hank Reinhardt and I had lunch with him a few years later, we asked about that. Wollheim said what the new owners couldn't grasp was that a publishing company differed from other businesses because everything it did had an impact on the culture of our society.

A lot of harsh things have been said about Frank A. Munsey, since his death in 1925, but cheap as he was, I think he grasped that central fact; once he was successful at all, he kept his pulps going by maintaining a certain quality. He might be willing to kill off a magazine in which there was no interest, but he made sure, if the interest was there, the pulp satisfied the customer.

As the pulp magazines proliferated, there evolved a specific type of fiction to appeal to the mass audience they permitted. Pulp fiction generally broke down into two categories: action fiction of a wide range of genres that were intended to appeal to men; and love stories. Although the sort of writing and fiction we generally think of when we use the term "pulp fiction" was there at a very early period, it did not fully evolve until the twenties and did not dominate the magazine field until the thirties.

There is very little arguement, of course, about the middle of the so-called pulp era. But I think it's worth emphasizing that the development of the pulp magazine by Frank Munsey did have a strong social and cultural impact in that it brought the potential of good, current entertainment into every corner of the country. Movies, radio, records, television and cheap paperback books were to follow, but (especially if you choose to dismiss newspapers either on the ground they were not entertainment; or were locally produced), the pulp magazines were the first form of entertainment generally available to everyone in the country, the year round.

Which is what I mean when I say that the pulps should be regarded as a cultural phenomena. They changed America. They brought attitudes to the population that echo down to the present time. They contributed in a major way to the formation of outlooks and philosophies in this country and, indirectly, around the world. Moreover, they reflect, often in surprising ways, the social, cultural and economic growth of America during the period in which they flourished.

And that's why it's important to know the end of the pulp era; but it's also a clue as to when it was. If the pulps were born of cetain forces and retained their strength as a result of those forces, then the pulps are clearly the children of those forces. The pulp era died when the economic situation was such that it was forced to change into something else.

The early '50s are when so many of the major pulps ceased to exist. But the changes, I think, began earlier. The rise of radio seemed to compliment the pulps, as did the rise of the talking movie. You could actually read and listen to the radio (well, much radio) and a movie was over in a couple of hours. A pulp magazine could fill an entire evening for just fifteen cents or a dime, and a thick pulp (or a slow reader) meant

several evenings' entertainment. The pulps brought entertainment into the home.

Around 1950 it became obvious the pulps were in trouble. Sales and ad revenue were down and those companies that could, got into other areas of business: comics, paperbacks or slicks. Many of them already had.

The digest magazines were an effort to change with the times. Originally, with Astounding and Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine in the 40s, they were supposed to represent a more distinguished and sophisticated format. 'Respectable' was the word, and by that I take it the purpose was to divorce the magazine from its less respectable pulp origins. Both those magazines were regarded by their publishers and readers as more literary or cerebral than other fiction magazines. So when the pulps were dying, the magazines that attempted to survive quickly abandoned the most obvious feature of the pulps: the size and appearance.

The digest size also, for a time, tried to capitalize on its portability. You were supposed to be able to put one in your pocket and read it on the bus or while you waited in your doctor's outer office: where presumably, they did not have television. (Actually, I never could get one of the things in my pockets.) This selling point was undercut by the far more portable paperback books.

And if the digest size magazines divorced themselves from the appearance of being pulp magazines, I think they also divorced themselves from the attitudes and some goals of pulps, as well. The most successful digests were those that attempted the same sort of respectability as Astounding and Ellery Queen, such as The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction. Those that attempted to hold onto their pulpish roots, such as the digest-sized issues of Weird Tales and Short Stories, were not financially successful -- not for any long period.

{It's worth mentioning here that an earlier experiment with producing more respectable magazines in the sf and fantasy field was the large size format adopted by Astounding and especially it's companion, Unknown Worlds, in the early 40s. I wonder if Unknown Worlds would still be around today if it had tried the digest size. . .}

There were some exceptions. Aberations, I guess we can call them. The most interesting were probably the magazines of Leo Margulies. The man behind the Thrilling line of pulps continued to publish pulp magazines in digest form for twenty years after the real things were gone: Mike Shane Mystery Magazine was the last great character pulp (and Shayne was a veteran of pulps from the forties). For a while, probably because of Shayne's popularity in paperback, Margulies was able to achieve a compromise between pulp tastes and those tastes that succeeded

them. Margulies also managed to publish short-lived magazines like Zane Grey, Charlie Chan and Man From U.N.C.L.E. that were definitely in the pulp spirit. The most successful of them were probably the two U.N.C.L.E. magazines he did, coattailing on the popularity of the TV series and the Ace paperbacks.

Most of the other digest aberations were science fiction magazines like Royal Publications' Science Fiction Adventures and its British counterpart from Nova. Around 1959-1960, one company attempted basing pulp magazines on successful TV series, not unlike what Margalies would later do with his U.N.C.L.E. publications. There were attempts at revivals, such as the various attempts at bringing Black Mask back and a couple of westerns such as Far West. And we mustn't forget the several efforts to accomodate Weird Tales to the modern world.

Despite these, I think the pulps, as a field, died around 1956. Everything past that time must be regarded on its own merit, as either an aberation -- or no pulp at all.

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WHAT IS A PULP? SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS.

Of course when Hugo Gernsback invented what we now think of as the first true science fiction magazine, he put it in a large size format similar to that which Astounding tried in the early 40s. Gernsback was a great one for thinking of stf in terms of its educational value and I have no doubt that part of the idea was to divorce the magazines from ordinary pulps. But there may have been considerations. The large size certainly showed up better on a newsstand, and it certainly showed off those wonderful covers and interiors by Frank R. Paul.

Moreover, it was successful. Amazing is supposed to have had a circulation under Gernsback in the neighborhood of 100,000 When Gernsback started his other sf magazines, he chose the same format.

These are not covered in the main article, however, because they appeared at a time when there was no real need for an all-fiction magazine to avoid the appearance of being a pulp simply to survive. Pulps were thriving in 1926 and, when Clayton brought out the first pulp-sized stf magazine (the January 1930 first issue of Astounding) it essentially sentenced the larger format to death. Amazing and Wonder soon moved to the 7 by 10" format.

I trust that everyone understands that my remarks about pulp magazines that went digest but did not cut themselves away from their pulp heritage holds for the digest versions of both the digest-sized experiments of the Shadow and Doc Savage. It's significant, I think, that both magazines were forced to give up

the small size and go back to pulp size, although it didn't help them much. A similar experiment with Popular's Famous Fantastic Mysteries (it went to an only slightly smaller pulp size, but it dropped illustrations) met with a similar failure.

To truly understand what happened, it would probably be necessary to study circulation figures on a month by month basis. The records of the old American News Company might contain more revelations than the files of the Munsey Magazines did. For one thing, we could accurately guage the effect of the Depression and the war on the pulps. Having only vaguely general ideas of which was selling how much, we're forced to do too much speculation to be completely comfortable with the conclusions.

Gerald W. Page

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EDITORS COMMENTS:

First I want to apologise to the contributors whose works took so long to appear and especially to O. Raymond Sowers who furnished the beautiful cover working to a deadline. I also apologise to those who subscribed and have waited all this long for the magazine to appear.

There were numerous reasons for the delay. A stroke, a septic elbow, badly infected arm being the main ones. They entailed a number of weeks in the hospital and of course a bit longer to recover from them. And then, even worse, a loss of interest in completing the project until my slan shack was built and I had most of the equipment I was going to use for it moved out here.

Why a "new series" THE PULP ERA? Over the years since I ceased publication of the original PULP ERA I have continued to receive requests for back issues that I can no longer furnish. So I decided to revive the magazine, but in a some what different format. To satisfy both old and new readers, the "new series" THE PULP ERA, will use new articles but will also reprint articles from the old series.

I will need your input on this. What articles do you want reprinted first? What type of new articles do you want to see? This first new issue is a theme issue with the theme being the western pulps and the western writers. Do you want more theme issues or would you rather have a broad mix in each issue?

Of course you realize that one theme issue can't do justice to an entire classification of magazines. This issue will merely touch the surface on the western pulps and western writers. There will be more articles on the western pulps in future issues. I would be glad to receive articles from some of the western pulp collectors for consideration in future issues. I would especially like to see some on the western series characters such as Pete Rice, Blue Steel, the Masked Rider, the Rio Kid, etc.

And, of course, I will welcome articles on <u>any</u> of the old pulps, and the authors and artists from them.

So really, from the 3rd issue on it is up to you as to the direction the next few issues of the Pulp Era will take. I want to hear from you.

This issue with the exception of the offset cover has been reproduced on a Roneo 870 mimeograph. All the stencils were cut on a Gestafax electric stencil cutter with the exception of the last four pages. The Gestafax gave out and so far I haven't had it in for repair. In the meantime I purchased an ICA electronic stencil cutter that will do both line and halftone. It is a much better machine and I will be using it from now on but keeping the Gestafax as a backup.

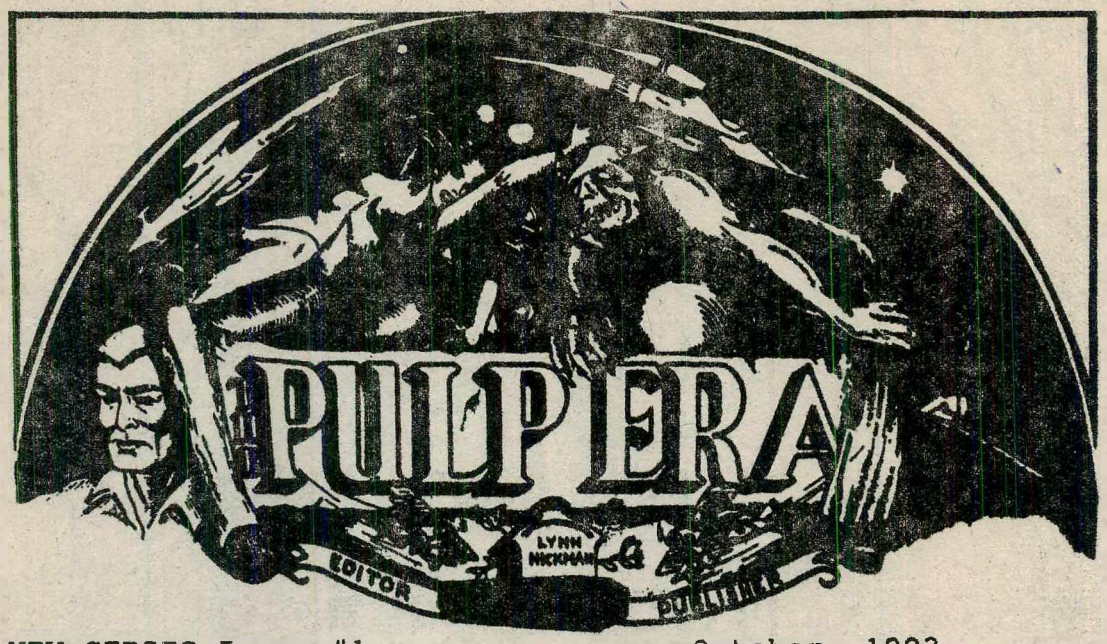
For the foreseeable future, the Pulp Era will be mimeographed. At least until I use up a large supply of mimeo paper, inks, and stencils and until I get a couple of my offsets moved out here to the slan shack. For those of you who don't know, I had a building put up at the back of the lot where I could go to do my fannish things such as publishing, reading, etc. without the interuptions I would have working in the house. I guess most of you would call it a studio, but those of you that are into science fiction will know why I call it the Slan Shack. No tv or phone out here to bother me. Just some desks, a reading chair, magazines, original artwork on the walls and a radio for background music. My wife did make me put in an intercom to the house so that she wouldn't have to run out here to get me if I was really needed for something important that came up, but that is all. I really love the place.

The next issue of the Pulp Era will feature a number of things. An article by Fred Pohl that he gave me a few years back with the stipulation that it be used in Science Fiction Chronical (Andy Porter's fine semi-pro zine) and the Pulp Era. That was fine with me as our circulations are different. Andy published it a couple of years ago. I will also reprint a short article from the old Pulp Era on Pirate Stories and have some other goodies. But to publish quarterly I won't be able to have every issue run to 45 pages as this one has. Frankly, costs are too high and the work is a little too much for this old fellow, so look for most issues to run about 24 pages.

I notice that in ¶2 I didn't mention that I also have my printing equipment out here in the SS. One end of the room I had made for that equipment. The rest is carpeted and is for the magazines, etc. my typers, the word processor, reading chair etc. I put in a bigger furnace than I need in case I want to add on to it in the future. The only thing that I didn't have put in was water. I have to carry water out for the coffee maker. If I do add on to it, I'll also have water put in.

So that is it for this issue of the "new series" The Pulp Era. Let your friends know that the Pulp Era has been revived and is now being published on a quarterly basis.

Lynn Hickman -- your editor and publisher since 1950



NEW SERIES Issue #1 October, 1993

Published by the Pulp Era Press P.O. Box six Wauseon, OH 43567. This issue is intended for PEAPS mailing #25 but is also available for $5.00 which includes costs of mailing, to others who might be interested.

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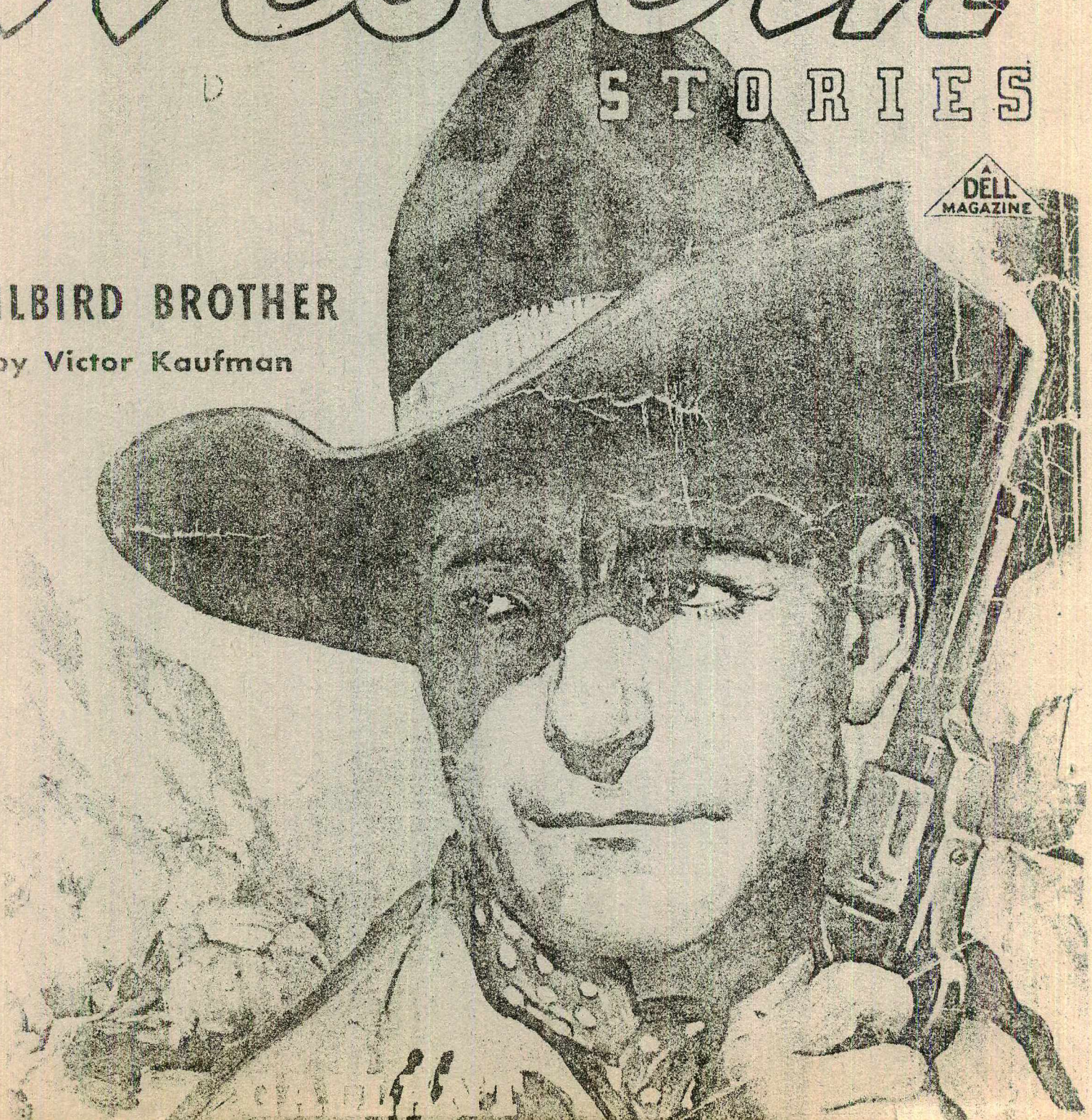

ILBIRD BROTHER

by Victor Kaufman