

CYCLOPAEDIA 32 – PULP HEROES

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OVERVIEW

Do you like your heroes and villains over-the-top? Do you enjoy two-fisted tales of action and adventure? Then the heroes of the pulp magazines of the late 1800s and early 1900s would excite you. The term pulps come from the reference to low-quality literature on inexpensive paper. Although some later famous authors and artists were to work on the pulps, the stories themselves were often considered sensational, exploitive, and rushed. Yet that is what made them so popular among the masses. The pulp magazines led to the penny dreadfuls, dime novels, and comic books.

For a minimal cost, readers were swept away on fantastical adventures of mystery, crime, romance, westerns, horror, science fiction, and masked avengers. For this article, we are focusing on the heroic and masked avenger pulps made famous with The Black Bat, Domino Lady, Doc Savage, The Phantom, The Shadow, The Spider, Zorro, and many others. For other stories, see other Cyclopaedias on Noir, Space Opera, Sword & Sorcery, and Wild West.

Argosy Magazine is seen as the first official pulp magazine and set the tone for all the others to come. Low costs for writers, the pulp paper, and printing led to affordable entertainment for the masses and allowed authors to stretch their imagination as they wrote quickly. They are stories of their time period and culture, so they don't always age well for readers today. Yet, these stories were the predecessors to the scifi, superheroes, and action heroes we love today!

THE MOST POPULAR PULP MAGAZINES

There were over 150 pulp magazines in print at one time but these stood out as the greatest with the most significant stories and greatest longevity:

- Adventure
- Amazing Stories
- Argosy Magazine
- Black Mask
- Blue Book
- Dime Detective
- Flying Aces
- Marvel Tales
- Planet Stories
- Startling Stories
- Thrilling Wonder Stories
- Weird Tales
- Western Story Magazine

Following are sources of information pertaining to Pulp Heroes to assist prospective game masters, game designers, writers, and storytellers in knowing where to start their research.

ARTICLES

From Pulp Hero to Superhero: Culture, Race, and Identity in American Popular Culture, 1900-1940

By Chambliss, Julian and Svtasvsky, William
Source:

https://scholarship.rollins.edu/as_facpub/2
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BOOKS

The Age of Dimes and Pulps: A History of Sensationalist Literature, 1830–1960

By Agnew, Jeremy

The Age of the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines, 1880-1950

By Ashley, Michael

Amazing Stories: Giant 35th Anniversary Issue

By Bradbury, Ray and Burroughs, Edgar Rice

Anti-Foreign Imagery in American Pulps and Comic Books, 1920–1960

By Madison, Nathan Vernon

The Art of the Pulps: An Illustrated History

By Ellis, Douglas and Hulse, Ed

The Best of Amazing Stories: The 1940 Anthology: Special Retro-Hugo Edition

By Wilcox, Don

Buckaroo Banzai

By Rauch, Earl Mac

The Call of Cthulhu

By Lovecraft, H. P.

Cheap Thrills: An Informal History of the Pulp Magazines

By Goulart, Ron

The Classic Era of American Pulp Magazines

By Haining, Peter

Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life

By Farmer, Philip Jose

Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze

By Robeson, Kenneth

Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers

By Server, Lee

The Encyclopedia of Pulp Heroes

By Nevins, Jess

The Fantastic Pulps

By Haining, Peter

The Great Pulp Heroes

By Hutchison, Don

Hellboy - Comic Book

How to Write Pulp Fiction

By Bell, James Scott

Indiana Jones and the Longship of the Gods

By Hohlbein, Wolfgang

Indiana Jones and the Peril at Delphi

By Macgregor, Rob

It's A Man's World: Men's Adventure Magazines, The Postwar Pulps, Expanded Edition

By Parfrey, Adam

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen -

Comic Book

A Princess of Mars

By Burroughs, Edgar Rice

Pulp Art

By Lesser, Robert

Pulp Culture: The Art of Fiction Magazines

By Robinson, Frank M.

The Pulps: Fifty Years of American Pop Culture

By Goodstone, Tony

The Pulps: A Yearly Guide

By Nevins, Jess

The Savage Tales of Solomon Kane

By Howard, Robert E.

The Shadow - Comic Book

Storytelling in the Pulps, Comics, and Radio

By DeForest, Tim

Tarzan of the Apes

By Burroughs, Edgar Rice

Weird Tales: Seven Decades of Terror1997

By Betancourt, John and Weinberg, Robert

Young Indiana Jones and the Plantation Treasure

By McCay, William

GAMES

.45 Adventure: Crimefighting Action in the Pulp Era - Tabletop Game

Adventure! - RPG

The Adventurers: The Pyramid of Horus - Tabletop Game

The Adventurers: The Temple of Chac - Tabletop Game

Arkham Horror - Tabletop Game

Ernest Evans - Video Game

Feng Shui - RPG

Fireball Island - Tabletop Game

Fortune and Glory: The Cliffhanger Game - Tabletop Game

The Adventures of Indiana Jones Role-

Playing Game - RPG

John Carter: Warlord of Mars - Tabletop Game

Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes - RPG

Pulp Adventure - RPG

Pulp Era: Cinematic Adventures in the Yesteryear! - RPG

Pulp Cthulhu - RPG

Pulp Fantastic - RPG

Pulp Hero - RPG

Race to Adventure - Tabletop Game

The Spirit of the Century - RPG

Thrilling Tales - RPG

Tomb Raider - Video Game

Two-Fisted Tales - RPG

Uncharted - Video Game

Uncharted: Board Game - Tabletop Game

CINEMA

The Adventures of Bricso County, Jr. - TV

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension

The Adventures of Tintin

At the Earth's Core

Biggles: Adventures in Time

Big Trouble in Little China

The Call of Cthulhu

Captain America: The First Avenger

Darkman

Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze

Fantômas: In the Shadow of the Guillotine

Firewalker

The Green Hornet

Greystoke

Gunga Din

Hellboy

High Road to China

Hooten and the Lady - TV

Jonny Quest - TV

Judex

Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark
King Kong
King Solomon's Mines
The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
The Legend of Tarzan
Librarians - TV
The Librarian: Quest for the Spear
Lost Horizon
The Lost World
The Mask of Fu Manchu
The Mask of Zorro
The Mummy
National Treasure
The Phantom
The Rocketeer
Red Tails
Relic Hunter - TV
Romancing the Stone
The Shadow
The Shadow Strikes
Sheena
Sin City
Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow
Solomon Kane
The Spider's Web
Tales of the Gold Monkey - TV
Tarzan the Ape Man
The Testament of Dr. Mabuse
Tomb Raider
The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles - TV
Zorro - TV

LOCATIONS

PulpFest
<http://www.pulpfest.com>

Pulp Fiction at the Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/news/pulp.html>

Pulp Magazines Project
<https://pulpmags.org/>

Tarzana
<http://www.tarzana.ca/>

PEOPLE

Lars Anderson
Walter Baumhofer
Rudolph Belarski
Earle K. Bergey
Margaret Brundage
Edgar Rice Burroughs
John W. Campbell
Edd Cartier
Raymond Chandler
Robert H. Davis
Lester Dent
Lee Falk
John Philip Falter
Virgil Finlay
Walter B. Gibson
Maxwell Grant
Arthur Sullivan Hoffman
Robert E. Howard
L. Ron Hubbard
Gloria Stoll Karn
Murray Leinster
H.P. Lovecraft
Jess Nevins
Frank R. Paul
Henry W. Ralston
George Rozen
Norman Saunders
Doc Savage
Joseph T. Shaw
E.E. Smith
Harry Steeger
Hugh J. Ward
Farnsworth Wright