

Pulp magazines (or pulp fiction; often referred to as "the pulps") were inexpensive fiction magazines. They were widely published from the 1920s through the 1950s. The term pulp fiction can also refer to mass market paperbacks since the 1950s.

The name "pulp" comes from the cheap wood pulp paper on which such magazines were printed. Magazines printed on better paper and usually offering family-oriented content were often called "glossies" or "slicks". Pulp magazines were the successor to the "penny dreadfuls", "dime novels", and short fiction magazines of the nineteenth century. Although many respected writers wrote for pulps, the magazines are perhaps best remembered for their lurid and exploitative stories, and for their similarly sensational cover art. Modern superhero comic books are sometimes considered descendants of "hero pulps"; pulp magazines often featured illustrated novel-length stories of heroic characters such as The Shadow, Doc Savage, and the Phantom Detective.

Pulp covers, printed in color on higher-quality (slick) paper, were famous for their half-dressed damsels in distress, usually awaiting a rescuing hero. Cover art played a major part in the marketing of pulp magazines, and a number of the most successful cover artists became as popular as the authors featured on the interior pages. Among the most famous pulp artists were Frank R. Paul, Virgil Finlay, Edd Cartier, Margaret Brundage and Norman Saunders. Covers were important enough to sales that sometimes they would be designed first; authors would then be shown the cover art and asked to write a story to match.

Later pulps began to feature a few interior illustrations, depicting elements of the stories. The drawings were printed in black ink on the same cream-colored paper used for the text, and had to use specific techniques to avoid blotting on the coarse texture of the cheap pulp. Thus, fine lines and heavy detail were usually not an option. Shading was by crosshatching or pointillism, and even that had to be limited and coarse. Usually the art was black lines on the paper's background, but Finlay and a few others did some work that was primarily white lines against large dark areas.

Pulps were typically seven inches wide by ten inches high, about half an inch thick, having around 128 pages. In their first decades, they were most often priced at ten cents, while competing slicks were twenty-five cents.

The first "pulp" is considered to be Frank Munsey's revamped Argosy Magazine of 1896, about 135,000 words (192 pages) per issue on pulp paper with untrimmed edges and no illustrations, not even on the cover. While the steam powered printing press had been in widespread use for some time, enabling the boom in dime novels, prior to Munsey, no one had combined cheap printing, cheap paper and cheap authors in a package that provided affordable entertainment to working-class people. In six years Argosy went from a few thousand copies per month to over half a million.

Street & Smith were next on the market. A dime novel and boys weekly publisher, they saw

Argosy's success, and in 1903 launched The Popular Magazine, which was billed as the "biggest magazine in the world" by virtue of being two pages longer than Argosy. It should be noted that due to differences in page layout, the magazine had substantially less text than Argosy. The Popular Magazine introduced the use of color covers to the pulp world. The magazine began to take off when, in 1905, the publishers acquired the rights to serialize a new work, Ayesha, by H. Rider Haggard, a sequel to his very successful novel She. In 1907, they raised the cover price to fifteen cents and added thirty pages per issue; this, along with a solid stable of authors, proved a successful formula and circulation began to approach that of Argosy. This demonstrated that the market could support multiple competitors. Street and Smith's next key innovation was the introduction of specialized genre pulps, each magazine focusing on one genre such as detective stories, romance, etc.

At their peak of popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, the most successful pulps could sell up to one million copies per issue. Among the best-known titles of this period were Adventure, Amazing Stories, Black Mask, Dime Detective, Flying Aces, Horror Stories, Marvel Tales, Oriental Stories, Planet Stories, Spicy Detective, Startling Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Unknown and Weird Tales.[1]

The Second World War paper shortages had a serious impact on pulp production, starting a steady rise in costs and the decline of the pulps. Beginning with Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine in 1941, pulp magazines began to switch to digest size; smaller, thicker magazines. In 1949, Street & Smith closed most of their pulp magazines in order to move upmarket and produce slicks. The pulp format declined from rising expenses, but even more due to the heavy competition from comic books, television, and the paperback novel. In a more affluent post-war America, the price gap compared to slick magazines was far less significant. In the 1950s Men's adventure magazines began to replace the pulp.

The 1957 bankruptcy of the American News Company, then the primary distributor of pulp magazines, has sometimes been taken as marking the end of the "pulp era"; by that date, many of the famous pulps of the previous generation, including Black Mask, The Shadow, Doc Savage, and Weird Tales, were defunct. Most all of the few remaining pulp magazines are science fiction or mystery magazines now in formats similar to "digest size", such as Analog Science Fiction and Fact and Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. The format is still in use for some lengthy serials, like the German science fiction weekly Perry Rhodan (over 2450 issues as of 2009).

Over the course of their evolution, there were a huge number of pulp magazine titles; Harry Steeger of Popular Publications claimed that his company alone had published over 300, and at their peak they were publishing 42 titles per month.[2] Many titles of course survived only briefly. While the most popular titles were monthly, many were bimonthly and some were quarterly.

The collapse of the pulp industry has changed the landscape of publishing in that pulps were the single largest sales outlet for short stories; combined with the decrease in slick magazine fiction markets, people attempting to support themselves by writing fiction must now generally

write novels or book-length anthologies of shorter pieces.

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Genres

Pulp magazines often contained a wide variety of genre fiction, including, but not limited to, fantasy/sword and sorcery, gangster, detective/mystery, science fiction, adventure, westerns (also see Dime Western), war, sports, railroad, romance, horror/occult (including "weird menace"), "spicy/saucy" (soft porn), and Série Noire (French crime mystery). The American Old West was a mainstay genre of early turn of the century novels as well as later pulp magazines, and lasted longest of all the traditional pulps. In many ways, the later men's adventure ("the sweats") was the replacement of pulps.

Many classic science fiction and crime novels were originally serialized in pulp magazines such as Weird Tales, Amazing Stories, and Black Mask.

list

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2-Gun Western\

10 Story Book\

10 Story Western\

A. Merritt's Fantasy Magazine\

Aboriginal Science Fiction\

Action\

Adam\

Adventure\

Adventure (Popular)\

Adventure Tales\

Aeon authors\

Air Adventures\

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine\

All Western (Pulp magazine) (Dell)\

All-Story Weekly\

Ally Sloper's Half Holiday\

Amazing Adventures\

Amazing Science Fiction\

Amazing Stories\

Amazing Stories Quarterly\

American\

American Boy (The)\

American Needlewoman\

American Woodsman\

Analog Science Fiction and Fact\
Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine\
Animerica\
Another Journal by Pett\
Apex Science Fiction and Horror Digest\
Argosy (Bentley & Son)\
Argosy (Munsey)\
Asimov's Science fiction magazine\
Astonishing Stories\
Astounding\
Astounding Science Fiction (UK)\
Astounding Stories of Super Science\
Aurealis (Australian Magazine Sf & F)\
Authentic Science Fiction\
Avon Fantasy Reader\
Avon Science Fiction Reader\
Ballou's Magazine\
Ballyhoo Magazine\
Barbie Lane - Egyptian_Museum\
Basketball Stories\
Battle Cry\
BBR Science Fiction and Fantasy\
Beadle's Half Dime Library\
Bedtime Tales\
Betty Pages (The)\
Big Book Western\
Black Book Detective\
Black Cat (The)\
Black Mask\
Black Static Horror Magazine\
Blighty\
Blue Book Magazine\
Bones Of The Children\
Book and Magazine Collector\
Bowery Boy Library\
Boys' Life\
Brave And Bold Weekly\
Calling All Girls & Calling All Kids (Parents Magazine)\
Captain Future\
Captain George's Comic World\
CAR TOONS\
Carnival\
Castle of Frankenstein\
Cavalcade\

Cemetery Dance Horror Magazine\
Challenging Destiny Magazine\
Chandamama\
Chicago Seed\
Child Life\
Chilling Monster Tales\
Click\
Comedy\
Complete Cowboy\
Complete Detective Cases\
Confidential\
Confidential Detective Cases\
Continent (The)\
Cosmic Stories\
Cosmos\
coven 13\
Crack Detective\
Crack Detective Stories\
Crestwood House Monster Series\
Crime Does Not Pay\
Crime Fiction Stories\
Crimes and Punishment\
Daily Bugle\
Deadwood Dick Library\
Detective Cases\
Detective Fiction Weekly\
Detective Story\
Detective Tales\
Dime Mystery Magazine\
Doc Savage Club Reader (Fanzine)\
Doctor Who\
Dude\
Duende\
Dynamic Science Stories\
Eagle\
East Village Other\
Eerie Tales\
Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine (Amer)\
Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine (UK)\
Esquire\
Exciting Western\
Expose' Detective\
Family Circle (The)\
Famous Fantastic Mysteries (Munsey)\

Famous Feature Stories\
Fanciful Tales of Time and Space\
Fantastic\
Fantastic Adventures\
Fantastic Novels\
Fantastic Story\
Fantastic Universe\
Fantasy & Science Fiction\
Fantasy and Science Fiction magazine of\
Fantasy Book\
Far Point Science Fiction and Fantasy\
Farmer's Wife\
Fate Magazine\
Fiction monthly (JAP)\
Fifteen Western Tales\
Fight Stories\
Flapper (The)\
Flying Cadet Magazine\
Follies\
Forbidden Worlds\
Frank Reade\
French Night Life Stories\
Frisco Employees' Magazine (The)\
frisco man\
Front Page Detective\
Frontier (The)\
Funny Wonder\
Future\
Future Fantasy\
Future Orbits\
Future Science Fiction\
G-8 and His Battle Aces\
Galaxie Anticipation\
Galaxy\
Galaxy Novel\
Galaxy Science fiction\
Galileo\
Gate Science Fiction and Fantasy (The)\
Gay Life Stories\
Ghost Stories\
Ginger Stories\
Girl Watcher\
Girls' Love Stories\
Golden Argosy\

Golden Days\
Gothic Tales Of Love\
Great Round World (The)\
Gud Greatest Uncommon Denominator\
Hannes Bok Treasury\
Harvest Magazine\
Helix\
Hollywood Nights\
Hotspur\
How You Can Defend Your Home!
Hub Sci-fi, Fantasy and Horror\
Hush-Hush\
if - worlds of science fiction\
Illustration\
Imagination\
Imaginative Tales\
Impulse\
Incredible Science Fiction\
Indian Stories\
Inside Detective\
Inside Movie\
International Insanity\
International Times\
interzone science fiction & fantasy\
Jungle Stories\
Jungle Stories Spring\
La Paree\
Laugh-In\
Liberty\
Liberty Boys of 76\
Life\
Life Story\
Little Blue Book\
Log Cabin\
Lost Continent Library Magazine\
Love Story\
Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction\
Magazine of Horror\
Mammoth Adventure\
Mammoth Mystery\
Man\
Man Junior\
Man to Man\
Manhunt\

Marvel Science Stories\
Masked Rider Western\
Master Detective\
McClure's Magazine\
Menomonee Falls Gazette\
Mentor\
Midnight Graffiti\
Modern Pulp\
Monster Fantasy\
Monster in my Pocket\
Monster Madness\
Monster Times\
Monster Times Collectors\
Motion Picture\
Mysterious Adventures\
National Insider (The)\
National Lampoon\
Nebula\
Nemesis Magazine\
New Detective Magazine\
New Eve\
New Worlds\
Nexus Science Fiction\
Nick Carter Stories\
Night Life Tales\
Northwest Romances\
Nostalgia Illustrated\
Nostalgia Journal\
Nugget\
Odyssey\
Official Detective Stories\
Omni\
Other Worlds\
Out of This World Adventures\
Oz\
Pals\
Panic\
Pep Stories\
Pett's Journal\
Picture Story\
Planet Magazine\
Planet Stories\
Planetary Report\
Printed Poison\

Puck\
Punch\
Rag (The)\
Railroad Stories\
Real Men\
Risqué Stories\
Rocket Stories\
Romantic Movie Stories\
Saturday Evening Post\
Saturn\
Science Fantasy\
Science Fiction\
Science Fiction (Fanzine)\
Science Fiction Adventures\
Science Fiction Chronicle\
Science Fiction Monthly\
Science Fiction Plus\
Science Fiction Quarterly (Columbia)\
Science Stories\
Science Wonder Stories\
Scientific Detective Monthly\
Scientific Thriller Series\
Scream Queens Illustrated\
Screen Thrills Illustrated\
Sea Stories\
Secret Service\
Secrets\
Sensational Crime Confessions\
Sexology\
Shadow (The)\
Shangai Gushi (JAP)\
Sherlock Holmes In The Case Of The Missing Martian\
Sherlock Holmes Mysteries\
Sick Magazine\
Silver Screen\
Sir!\
Snappy\
Something Wicked Sf & Horror Magazine\
Space 1999 Annual\
Space Science Fiction\
Space Wars\
Spaceway\
Speculations\
Spicy Adventure Stories\

Spicy Mystery Stories\
Spicy Stories\
Sport Story Magazine\
Startling Mystery Stories\
Startling Stories\
Startling Stories (New Zealand Edition)\
startling stories (UK)\
Startling Terror Tales\
SteamPunk Magazine\
Stories By Famous Authors Illustrated\
Stories magazine (JAP)\
Strange Adventures\
Strange Horizons Magazine\
Strange Stories\
Strange Tales\
Sunday Novel\
Super Science Stories\
Suppressed\
Suspense\
Tales of Torment\
Talking Pictures\
Teaspoon Door\
Ten Detective Aces\
Terror Tales\
This Is It\
Thrill Book (The)\
Thriller\
Thriller Weekly Library\
Thrilling Mystery\
Thrilling Science Fiction\
Thrilling Wonder Stories\
Thrills Incorporated\
Tip Top Library\
True Crime\
True Crime Detective\
True Detective\
True Mystery\
True Mystic Confessions\
Two-Gun Western Novels Magazine\
Uncanny Tales\
Uncensored Detective\
Unearth\
Unknown\
Unknown Worlds\

Venture\
Weird Mysteries\
Weird Science-Fantasy\
Weird Tales\
Western Story\
Whisper\
Wild West Weekly\
Witchcraft And Sorcery\
Women In Crime\
Wonder Stories\
Wonder Stories Quarterly\
Wonder Story Annual\
World Liberator\
World Of Horror\
Worlds Beyond\
Xiao.Xiaoshuo.Xuankan.Magazine (JAP)\
Year's Best Fantasy\
Year's Best Science Fiction (The)\
Year's Best Science Fiction Annual (The)\
Year's Best SF\