

= Comet ( magazine ) =

Comet was a pulp magazine which published five issues from December 1940 to July 1941 . It was edited by F. Orlin Tremaine , who had edited Astounding Stories , one of the leaders of the science fiction magazine field , for several years in the mid @-@ 1930s . Tremaine paid one cent per word , which was higher than some of the competing magazines , but the publisher , H @-@ K Publications , was unable to sustain the magazine while it gained circulation , and it was cancelled after less than a year when Tremaine resigned . Comet published fiction by several well @-@ known and popular writers , including E.E. Smith and Robert Moore Williams . The young Isaac Asimov , visiting Tremaine in Comet 's offices , was alarmed when Tremaine asserted that anyone who gave stories to competing magazines for no pay should be blacklisted ; Asimov promptly insisted that Donald Wollheim , to whom he had given a free story , should make him a token payment so he could say he had been paid .

= = Publication history = =

Although science fiction ( sf ) had been published before the 1920s , it did not begin to coalesce into a separately marketed genre until the appearance in 1926 of Amazing Stories , a pulp magazine published by Hugo Gernsback . By the end of the 1930s the field was booming . At the end of 1940 H @-@ K Publications , a small New York publishing operation owned by Harold Hersey , decided to launch a new sf magazine , titled Comet . The first issue was dated December 1940 . The editor was F. Orlin Tremaine , who was well @-@ known to and respected by the growing readership of science fiction because of his successful stint as editor of Astounding Stories in the early 1930s .

Tremaine paid a cent a word for stories , which was more than many of the other sf magazines that were crowding the field at the time ; the respectable pay rate no doubt helped him , but it put the magazine under additional financial pressure . Two other magazines launched at about the same time , Cosmic Stories and Stirring Science Stories , edited by Donald A. Wollheim , both paid nothing at all to writers , on the basis that if the magazines were successful , money might be available in the future . This annoyed Tremaine , and Isaac Asimov , who gave Wollheim a story for Cosmic Stories , later recalled Tremaine telling him that " any author who donated stories to Wollheim , and thus contributed to the destruction of competing magazines who paid , should be blacklisted in the field " . Asimov was sufficiently upset that he later obtained token payment from Wollheim so that he could assert he had been paid for his story .

= = Contents = =

Tremaine was able to acquire some worthwhile material , and the magazine showed improvement over its five issues . Among the better @-@ known stories Tremaine obtained was " Vortex Blaster " , by E.E. Smith ; this was the first in a series about Storm Cloud , later collected in book form . Other well @-@ received stories included " The Street That Wasn 't There " , by Clifford D. Simak and Carl Jacobi , and " Dark Reality " , by Robert Moore Williams . Sam Moskowitz , later a well @-@ known sf critic and historian , published some science fiction stories early in his career ; his first sale was to Tremaine , with " The Way Back " , which appeared in the January 1941 issue of Comet . There was also a " Short , Short Story Corner " which was targeted at new writers , though established authors were also asked to submit very short stories for this feature . Another competition , this time aimed at fans rather than writers , offered a prize of \$ 25 to the fan who had to overcome the most difficulties in order to attend the 1941 World Science Fiction Convention in Denver .

The Futurians , a group of New York science fiction fans many of whom would later go on to become well @-@ known sf writers , often produced stories that were the result of collaborations between four , five , or even more of their members . One example , " The Psychological Regulator " was originally written by Wollheim . It was rejected by Tremaine and rewritten , first by Robert A.W. Lowndes , then by John Michel , and then by Elsie Balter , with Tremaine rejecting it again after each rewrite . Finally C.M. Kornbluth rewrote it and Tremaine accepted the story , publishing it in the

March 1941 issue of Comet .

= = Bibliographic details = =

Comet was printed in pulp format , 128 pages , and was priced at 20 cents ; all five issues were edited by Tremaine . There was one volume of five issues ; the first four were subtitled " Stories of Super Time and Space " . The schedule was initially monthly , but switched to bimonthly after the first issue . There were no overseas reprint editions or anthologies of stories from the magazine .