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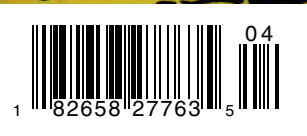


SPOTLIGHT ON
**HERB
TRIMPE
& FRIENDS!**



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Herb Trimpe



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Herb Trimpe



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On Our Cover: No, it's not really a coincidence that the cover of this issue of A/E—a partial re-creation by star interviewee **Herb Trimpe** of his cover for *The Incredible Hulk* #181 (Nov. 1974)—repeats the theme of the very recent Back Issue #70. Y'see, we had a totally different cover all ready to go (see above & below), when we discovered that the resolution on the scan we had wasn't of sufficient quality to allow it to reproduce well enough. So we scrapped that one, and it was publisher John Morrow—who was definitely aware of the then-upcoming BI cover—who suggested we use this one instead, of the several Hulk-related images Ye Editor proffered. We've got to admit, it fits—especially since Herb chose to discuss the 1974 origins of *The Wolverine* with Dewey Cassell. Thanks to **Aaron Sultan** for this sterling piece. [Hulk & Wolverine TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Above: And here's the **Herb Trimpe** commission illo we originally intended to use as this issue's cover—as provided by art dealer **Anthony Snyder**. (Visit his website at www.anthonysnyder.com/art) We had the black-&-white image he sent us scanned and eventually colored—with a backdrop of numerous examples of Trimpe Marvel art to frame it—but then we (meaning Ye Ed) couldn't locate the actual photocopy Anthony had sent, which the publisher felt we needed for better reproduction, nor could Anthony provide a better copy, since by then the art had been sold. So we decided to utilize the above figure—as colored by **Dave Gutierrez**—as our contents page illo. [Hulk TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Dan Adkins & Les Daniels



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FIRST PRINTING.

“Super-Heroes Are So Damned Boring!”

“Happy” HERB TRIMPE On His Years With Marvel Comics—And The Incredible Hulk

Conducted by Dewey Cassell

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris



INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: *There are those quiet people who work largely in the background, who don't seek fame or notoriety, but who get the job done time and again, making a big impact without making a sound. Herb Trimpe is one of those people. He worked for Marvel Comics for almost 30 years, commencing only a few years after the resurgence of super-heroes began, starting out in production but quickly proving his artistic ability drawing Westerns. As an artist, he exhibited a remarkable gift for storytelling. He drew stories for Marvel featuring classic characters like Nick Fury and Ant-Man, and off-beat characters like Killraven and Son of Satan. But he was also the premier artist on The Incredible Hulk for nearly eight years. He literally defined the iconic character for a generation, helping to make the green goliath a household name.*

I had a chance to talk with Herb about his background, his passions, his pet peeves, and his favorite comics, from the beginning through 1974. Like all the members of the Marvel Bullpen at the time, he was given a nickname by editor Stan Lee: “Happy” Herb Trimpe. After hearing him talk about his various accomplishments during the course of his career in a modest and matter-of-fact way, it seems perhaps that a more appropriate moniker might have been “Humble” Herb Trimpe. Here, then, is an interview with the man behind the monster—and so many other characters beloved by the fans of Marvel Comics. (This presentation is compiled from interviews conducted in 2012 and 2013.)

“So That’s The Family History”

DEWEY CASSELL: *When and where were you born?*

HERB TRIMPE: In Peekskill, New York, May 26th, 1939, on the Hudson River, an hour and a half from New York City.

CASSELL: *So, what does the “W” stand for in Herb W. Trimpe?*

TRIMPE: [laughs] It is “William.” Actually, they named me “Herbert,” after my dad, even way after the name wasn’t popular any more. And they named me “William” after his brother, my uncle. So it’s all family-related names. I wish they’d been a little more original. I would rather be a “John,” actually, or a “Fred,” I think.

CASSELL: *“Herb” is very distinctive, though.*

TRIMPE: Yeah, actually, it works as “Herb,” but it doesn’t work as “Herbert.”

Cover Me!

Herb Trimpe (top) at a Big Apple Con in 2008—and his most famous cover ever, for *The Incredible Hulk* #181 (Nov. 1974). See pp. 26-27 for some little-known facts about this cover and the 1974 origins of Wolverine. Thanks to Herb for the photo. [Cover © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

CASSELL: *What did your parents do?*

TRIMPE: My dad did various things. He was primarily a skilled sheet metal worker. That was his job during World War II, working in shipping yards in New Jersey. When World War II was ending, we moved back to Peekskill. My dad had to leave New Jersey because we lived in an area below sea level and it was very damp and he wound up in the hospital with pneumonia as a very young





A Family Album

(Far left:) Herb's father Herb Sr., his mother Annie, and himself, sometime in the first half of the 1940s.

(Center:) His mom today, with a great-grandchild.

(Above:) Herb's brother Mike, posing with Herb's biplane. Thanks to Herb for these photos.

man. It nearly did him in, so we moved back to New York State, when I was about five or so. And then he worked at various places. There were a number of companies around that are no longer there. You know, American industry is not what it used to be. [chuckles] You could live in a small town and go to work in a local factory, but it's not doable any more.

He actually wound up retiring with a very good pension from the Peekskill Public School System, where he was a—I don't know what they call it now—maintenance engineer. In those days, they called him a janitor. So that's where we wound up. I don't know if he actually retired. I don't think he had reached 65 yet, but he got sick from working around asbestos for too long and wound up contracting lung cancer, and that took about two years to finish my dad off. And my mom, who had been a stay-at-home mom when I was in elementary and junior high school, worked in a local supermarket in Peekskill at the time, back in the meat packing department.

When my dad died, she was kind of on her own. By that time, my brother and I were grown up and out and married. She lived alone for ten years after my dad died and then at 70, she remarried. It was an old friend of hers and my dad's, actually going way back to elementary school, whose wife had also died of cancer. They just started hanging out and wound up getting married. They were married for 14 years and then he died. She lived by herself up in Peekskill for a while. Then we bought a bigger house in Hurley after renting for three years in Rhinebeck, New York, and she moved in with us. My wife Patricia's mom is with us, too, so we've kind of got a mini-old-folks' home here. [Dewey chuckles]

The only other thing I can tell you about my mom is she always wanted to play golf, so she's very hip on all the tournaments that take place and she has her favorites. And she loves to watch *Dancing with the Stars* and both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, which she gets very opinionated and steamed up about. [chuckles] So that's the family history.

CASELL: You told me that you had a brother, named Mike, right? Were you the only children?

TRIMPE: Yeah, we were. And we were seven years apart, so it was quite a gap. It wasn't a brother you could interact with much in the early years, because of the age discrepancy. But when he got into high school and I was in my twenties, then we did a lot of stuff

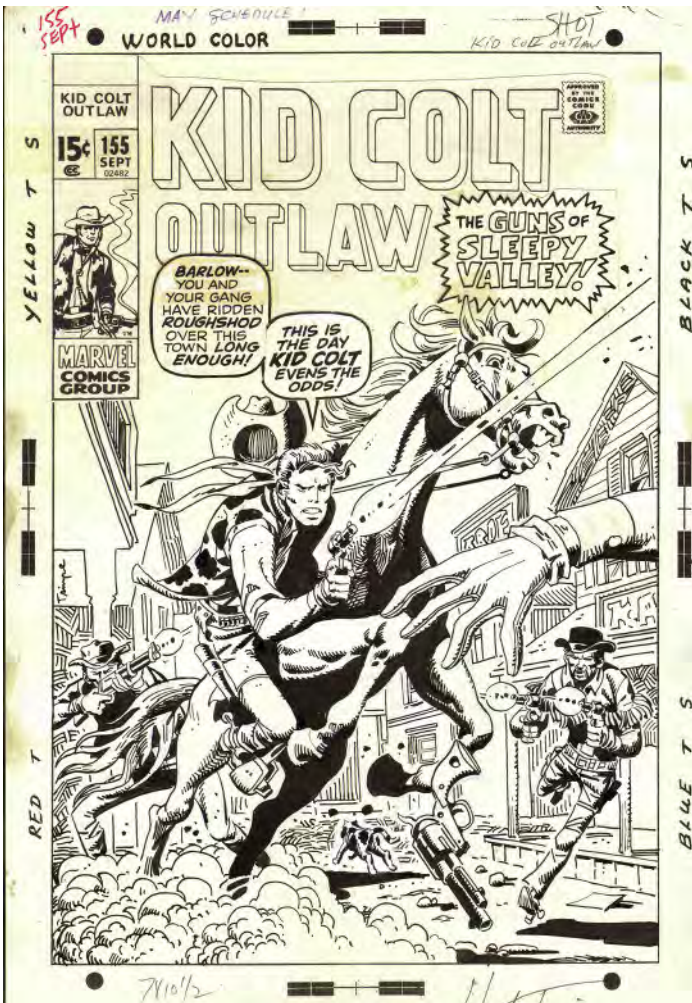
together, mostly playing baseball or just talking about baseball or talking about movies. But we were very close and stayed in contact on a regular basis. Yearly visits, sometimes twice a year, because he was living in Virginia with his family and I was still up here, but we always stayed in touch. We played tabletop gaming, war games.

CASELL: Oh, really? Any favorites?

TRIMPE: Well, he was a Civil War re-enactor. You know, it's quite a commitment, actually. It's almost like being in the military, because they have meetings and you have uniforms and you have to buy all your own stuff, and you join a unit, just like you would have at the time. If you were from New York, you'd be in a New York unit. If you were from Virginia, you'd be in a Virginia unit. It kind of works the same way, depending on what state you're in. So he was a member of a Virginia unit and my nephew Mark was, too. My nephew's still doing it. He's a big Civil War buff. I never saw any of the re-enactments, but I saw plenty of the people, a lot of the friends that were involved in it, and actually got to shoot some of those guns, like a rifle musket and a cap-and-ball pistol.

CASELL: Oh, wow. So, what was it like shooting one?

TRIMPE: A black powder pistol is big, it's heavy, and it makes a cloud of smoke every time it fires that obscures everything within ten feet. [Dewey laughs] Not to mention the noise. It's hard to believe. And also, since the barrels of the pistols were unrifled, it was like throwing a knuckleball. There was no direction on the ball when it came out, so it could do anything. It could go up, it could go down. He put up a board in his back yard that was maybe ten inches wide and two feet high. He just propped it up against a tree and I stood maybe 25 feet away from it and couldn't hit it. [mutual laughter] They were only really effective at practically point-blank range. An unrifled musket is about the same thing, except you've got the length of the barrel, so you've got a little more positive direction. That's why they shot in blocks of a hundred or 200 people at a time, so you would hit something. A musket is not rapid-fire, but you can really hit something. There's a famous story in the Civil War where a sniper studied the movements of one of the Union generals during the war. He just sat in a tree for a week and watched what this guy did in his camp through binoculars.



the production chief. [A/E EDITOR'S NOTE: Actually, in the late 1960s, Sol Brodsky was still production manager, with John Verpoorten as his principal assistant until Brodsky left to co-found Skywald in 1970.] I did take some samples up to DC, but I didn't have anything current. It was all stuff I'd done in art school or done for fun. So, I got talking to Verpoorten, and he said, "You should bring whatever you've got up to the office and let Sol Brodsky take a look at it," because Sol was screening incoming artists, of which there weren't very many, I can tell you. It wasn't like now.

CASELL: What was your first assignment at Marvel?

TRIMPE: When I brought my work up and Sol Brodsky looked at it, I immediately got work inking Westerns freelance—*Kid Colt*, *Rawhide Kid*, *Two-Gun Kid*—and that worked out good.

CASELL: Do you think Stan had you ink Westerns as a try-out for penciling work?

TRIMPE: I don't think he saw inking as a lesser form of the artwork where you could take an amateur and have them do it, since inking takes quite a bit of expertise in itself. But, saying that, I did start out inking Westerns at Marvel over top of Werner Roth and Larry Lieber and guys like that. I think I inked some of Dick [Ayers]'s stuff and it was quite enjoyable. So I don't know if that was by design or just because they needed inkers on the work, because the number of Western titles was quite extensive in the mid-'60s. There were [several] Westerns out of less than twenty

Here's Looking At You Again, Kid!

From time to time, Trimpe would return to Westerns, if only to draw covers for comics that were often all-reprint, as per the original art for that of *KCO* #155 (Sept. 1971)—or for a commission illo, as per this rousing trio of *Kid Colt*, *Ringo Kid*, and *Rawhide Kid*. Courtesy of Jeff Jaworski & Michael Dunne, respectively. [© Marvel Characters.]





Those Magnificent Men And Herb's Flying Machine

(Above:) Sooner or later, everybody got a look at Herb's biplane! Seen at left is artist & production man John Verpoorten (pre-mustache); at far right is their friend and one-time fellow art student Stu Schwartzberg, later a writer and artist for Marvel parody mags. The other gents are unidentified, though Herb himself is probably one of those in the background. Pic courtesy of mutual friend Bill Peckmann.

(Right:) Another machine of passing importance to Herb: Marvel's 1970s Photostat machine, of which he became the first staff operator. (Schwartzberg was the second.) Photo taken by Robert Policastro in 1971.



same thing. And we were asked to look at Jack. Not so much "draw like Kirby"—that wasn't it. A lot of people *voluntarily* drew like Kirby, like Barry Smith had a strong Kirby [influence] in the beginning, as did Jim Steranko, but they both took it one step further. They both went into their own realm after a while, and they were both unique and unusual because of that. Me? I didn't know where the hell I was going.

"[Stan Lee] Saw The Big Picture"

CASELL: *What other artists were working at Marvel at the time?*

TRIMPE: Most of the guys in place were a generation before me, and they were solid craftsmen. When I came into Marvel, I had to squeeze in between guys like Romita, Colan, Kirby, John Buscema, Don Heck, Bill Everett. These guys were excellent artists. They had grace and style. Inkers like Sinnott and Giacoia—nobody can do that today. Nobody knows that kind of brushwork and the kind of things they did with ease, it seemed. It was magnificent-looking art. If you see an original Buscema page, it's just astounding work. It's incredible. So when I was coming in, I was the piker of the bunch. I came on around the same time Barry Smith came in and shortly after (or maybe before) Jim Steranko. We were the more-or-less contemporaries in the '60s. Of course, I couldn't draw anywhere near any of them.

CASELL: *What was it like working with Stan Lee?*

TRIMPE: I was an excellent storyteller, and I think that's what sold Stan. Because Stan's genius—never mind the dispute between characters and who created what—his revelation to comics was having the artists visualize the story. I heard him say early in the game that it's primarily a visual medium. And this was coming out of a writer's mouth, mind you. So Stan was not a small guy. He saw the big picture. He realized that if you didn't have the story, you didn't have really anything. I was still drawing in the Jack Davis style when I got to Marvel. Stan put his foot down on that immediately. No more nine panels on a page, and scritch-scratchy cross-hatching. Jack Davis' stuff is fantastic, but he had this cartoony adventure style, and there just wasn't any room for that at Marvel. They were deep into the super-hero genre, and rightly so for the time, because it was exploding.

overall titles. When you included the romance magazines, they took up quite a percentage of the total output of titles in the mid-'60s. And they were good books to work on, too.

CASELL: *I heard that at one point you ran the Photostat machine.*

TRIMPE: I got a call from Sol one day and he said, "We're not going to send galleys out to copy anymore. We're going to do all that stuff in-house and we're getting this big photographic device that we can shoot text or pictures on." This was when cut-and-paste was actually cut-and-paste. And it was about eight feet long and it had a bed to put the work on, and a huge adjustable camera, and you could feed the paper right into a developer and then a fixer and then into a dryer. And he said, "We need somebody to operate that—there's a technician coming in from the company—would you like to take the job?" And I said, "Sure, it sounds good. I'll do that." So that's when I started working for \$130 a week, and I did that for maybe six months.

CASELL: *Did you continue to do any artwork?*

TRIMPE: During that time, I did ink some Westerns on the side, and then I did "The Phantom Eagle" with Gary Friedrich and some other odds and ends.

CASELL: *Did you enjoy doing the Westerns?*

TRIMPE: Yeah, because I liked Western comics. Actually, I think the first full-length story I did was "Shoot-Out at Hooker Flat." It was in a *Kid Colt* comic. [INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: *Kid Colt* Outlaw #134, May 1967.]

CASELL: *Did you have reference for what horses looked like or different styles of guns?*

TRIMPE: I made 'em up. I made horses up. [Dewey laughs] I draw terrible horses. I didn't really use photos much. That might have been one of Jack's influences, because Jack just made everything up out of whole cloth. He just invented it, and I think I was doing the

to the high school, it's all new to them by that time.

"Hey, Trimpe... You Want To Draw *The Hulk*?"

CASSELL: How did you get involved with the Hulk?

TRIMPE: I inked a couple of "Hulk" stories in *Tales to Astonish* that Marie Severin did. And then, for some reason, Marie went on to bigger and better things. Stan had other plans for her. I don't know if he wanted her to do more coloring or what, but I had been working in the production department for about six months—and doing freelance on the side, which included the infamous "Phantom Eagle"—and he stuck his head in my cubicle one day and said, "Hey, Trimpe... you want to draw *The Hulk*?" I said, "Oh, okay." To me, it was more of a steady gig.

CASSELL: When you started inking *The Incredible Hulk* over Marie's pencils, did you have any inkling that they were going to want you to take over the book?

TRIMPE: Well, no. I do think that the inking I did on that was really building a foundation for going further, although, at the time, I had no idea how long that would be. We just didn't think in those terms. It was just, "Oh, it was a job? Okay. What's next?"



Herby In The Middle

(Above:) Trimpe's first brush with *The Incredible Hulk* occurred in issue #106 (Aug. 1968), when he finished up breakdowns by then-regular penciler Marie Severin, which were then inked by George Tuska. Contrary to the conversation between himself and Dewey Cassell, however, Herb never inked any "Hulk" stories penciled by Marie, so he was probably thinking of this one-shot assignment. The splash page was scripted by Archie Goodwin. Thanks to Stephen Moore. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Take Me To Your Leader!

(Above:) Stan Lee and Herb Trimpe worked in tandem on *The Incredible Hulk* #115 (May 1969). Thanks to Dewey Cassell. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

CASSELL: How was it picking up where Marie left off?

TRIMPE: I don't think I ever had a serious hitch except when I started penciling *The Hulk*. There was a little transition period when I was doing layouts, and I was kind of falling into the EC style. I did about four pages and showed them to Stan and he said, "Ehhh, let me get Frank [Giacioia] to lay this out and you follow that. And that's the way I want you to do it from now on." So I said okay. I tore up the pages and I threw them in the trash, right in the Bullpen, and Frank laid out the story. I followed Frank's lead and I tightened it and it was fine. But the first complete issue that I penciled was laid out by Frank Giacioia, who, of course, was an inker. That was [*The Incredible Hulk* #109]. These were the days when inkers were first-rate pencilers. They pretty much are today, too, but he was an excellent penciler, as is Joe Sinnott. And I kind of got it right away.

Stan had no complaints and from that point on, never really said anything about any layouts or storytelling again. He asked me a couple of times when I was going to learn to draw [*mutual laughter*], but other than that, there was no real critical discussion as to the content that I was doing. I was trying to follow Marie's Hulk, and I think I eventually got around to it after a year or so. Stan was absolutely correct, but in retrospect now, I'm looking at that stuff and it has a quaint quality to it that I think a lot of the fans liked, because they still continue to ask for signings and pictures and drawings, and the collectors seemed to have maintained an interest.

Sidebar:

Fingers In The Dike

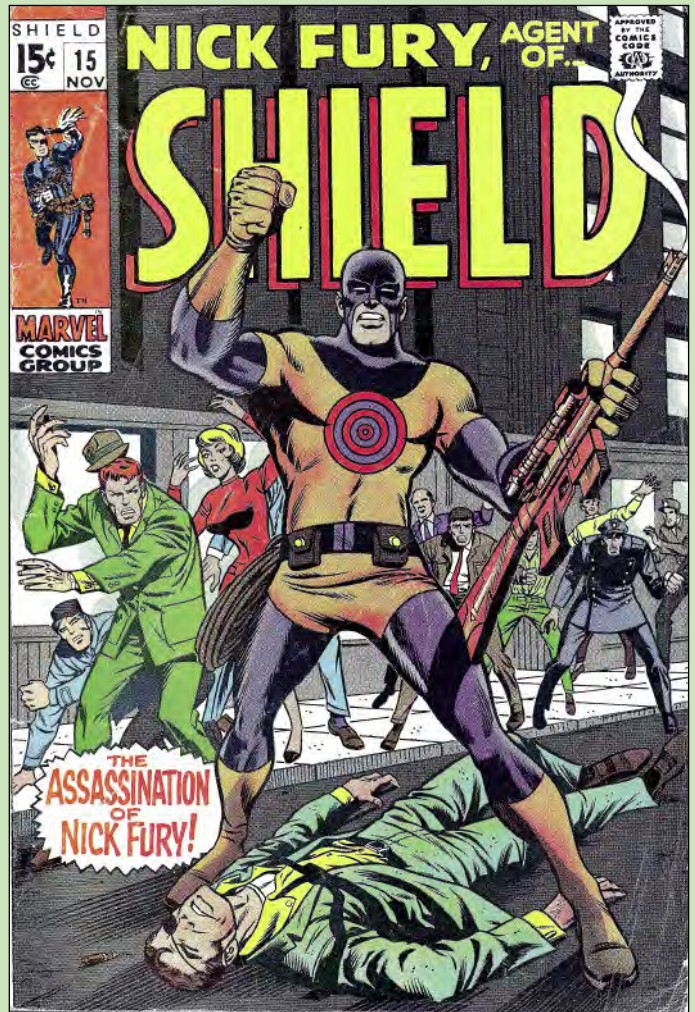
It may surprise some people to read this interview with Herb Trimpe and find that, while he remembers a lot about working at Marvel and drawing *The Incredible Hulk*, he does not recall details about, for example, the four issues of *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* that he drew in 1969. The fact is that, for many of his generation of artists, as for most of the members of the ones that preceded it, drawing comics was fundamentally a job—a fun job, mind you, but first and foremost a way to pay the rent and put food on the table. So, asking Trimpe if he remembers creating the villain Bulls-Eye for *S.H.I.E.L.D.* is a bit like asking William Shatner why the crew of the *Starship Enterprise* beamed down to the planet in episode 6 of *Star Trek*. In Trimpe's own words, it was "just another hole in the dike that somebody had to put their finger in."

Still, even on his short-term assignments, Trimpe often made a meaningful contribution to the Marvel comic book canon. Following, then, is a slightly more detailed examination of a few of the comic book titles in this time period, other than *Incredible Hulk*, for which Trimpe provided that finger.

—Dewey Cassell.

Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.: As mentioned, Trimpe drew four issues of this title, and an equal number of covers for the book. He had tough shoes to fill, following Jim Steranko, Frank Springer, and Barry Smith on the title. His story layouts reflect a continuation of the dynamic panel designs first put to such effective use by Steranko. And Trimpe co-created (with Gary Friedrich) the villain Bulls-Eye for issue #15, which proved to be the final original story in that first series. While not the same Bulls-eye who later plagued Daredevil, the two villains did share more than a name. Both were assassins, both used a bullseye on their costumes, and both had unerring aim, although the earlier Bulls-Eye owed his accuracy to his weapon. The Friedrich/Trimpe character died in the same issue in which he was introduced. One other item of note is that Trimpe's first pencils for *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, in issue #8, appeared only a few months after he took the reins on *The Incredible Hulk* from Marie Severin.

Ant-Man (Marvel Feature): When the new "Ant-Man" series debuted in 1972 in *Marvel Feature* #4, it touted the creative team of artist Trimpe and writer Mike Friedrich (no relation to Gary). The re-launch of this classic 1960s Marvel hero was exceptionally well-written by Friedrich, with intelligent dialogue, and Trimpe's artwork reflected his gift for storytelling. Stuck in his shrunken form, Ant-Man dons a new costume and forges new adventures while seeking for a cure for his condition. It was a thinking man's



Don't Yield, Buy *S.H.I.E.L.D.*!
 An action page from *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #14 (Sept. 1969) and the cover of #15 (Nov. '69), both by Trimpe. Thanks to Dewey Cassell.
 [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Super Is As Super Does

The "Radical Chic" storyline that Thomas and Trimpe concocted for *The Incredible Hulk* #142 (Aug. 1971), inspired by the writings of neo-journalist Tom Wolfe, led to Herb drawing this "Superwoman" story for the Oct. 1971 issue of *Esquire* magazine. Guess DC Comics figured they'd look like "male chauvinist pigs" (a phrase from the third of its three pages) if they complained about the heroine's name. Writer unknown. [© the respective copyright holders.]

[Continued from p. 28]

the name, puts in some suggestions, it doesn't matter how much the artist does. In my experience, the writer seems generally to get credit for the creation. If you were to count the artists' first drawing of a character as the actual creation, then I would have created many, many characters.

CASSELL: *I saw the Son of Satan model sheet. It was great.*

TRIMPE: It's 11 by 17 and it was a sketch of the character. And I remember when I did it, I think I did it at the office at Marvel and it was basically just a pencil sketch of the character. Then I didn't have anything else to do, so I added color and I made a logo and it turned it into a pin-up kind of thing. It looked pretty good.

CASSELL: *Was it ever published?*

TRIMPE: No, that was never published. It wasn't meant to be. It was basically to set up something in my head as to how the character would look. There was no posterity involved in it. I was just saving it for myself to use as reference, or anybody else that might need it for reference.

CASSELL: *What about Killraven, the character that appeared under the banner of "War of the Worlds"?*

TRIMPE: That's right. Yeah, I remember the character well, and the

title, but as for me getting involved in that, I have no idea. I probably had the time, as far as I can tell.

CASSELL: *You also did a piece for Esquire magazine back in the early '70s, didn't you?*

TRIMPE: Yeah, I did a thing for *Esquire* on Gloria Steinem. She was a female activist during that time.

CASSELL: *Sure, she founded Ms. magazine, right?*

TRIMPE: Yeah, Ms. magazine, that's exactly right. She worked for *Playboy* at one time. She was a Bunny for a day, or something like that. So, there was a three-page thing that I did for *Esquire*. You know, the weird thing is this: I just got an e-mail from somebody about two weeks ago. You know Linda Ellerbee from NBC? Well, they have a subsidiary show that she's a head of, and the woman that runs this other show e-mailed me and wanted to know if I had the artwork to that. [laughs]

CASSELL: *Oh, you're kidding!*

TRIMPE: No... or where they could find it, because they wanted to use it on TV and they had called *Esquire*. *Esquire* said, "Yeah, no problem, but you should ask the artist." I don't know why. *Esquire* owns it. But they got in touch with me anyway. And I said, "Yeah, I don't care. I totally forgot about that." And I don't think I ever had the artwork back from it, but I actually think I have the printed pages somewhere around here. I think I was using them in my portfolio as samples years ago.

"Comic Strips Were Always My Prime Objective"

CASSELL: *It's a great example of something different that you had done. Did you ever do any newspaper comic strips?*

TRIMPE: Yeah, I did a strip for a Long Island newspaper, *Newsday*, and they had an off-beat approach. They did a lot of local news and I don't know if they were soliciting, but they had a page that was really a showcase for comic artists and you could do anything you want with it. Somebody must have talked to me—maybe Stan came around the office and said, "Anybody want to get involved in this?" But comic strips were always my prime objective, even though I didn't do a whole lot about it once I was working at Marvel. I did a strip for them, about twelve installments, Sunday installments. Somewhere, I still have the originals to that. It was called *The Eternal Soldier*. It was in the '70s, and I had gotten back from Vietnam, and I liked military stuff, liked the hardware and especially airplanes. But somehow, I was compelled, I guess just by the popular thought at the time, so it was generally an anti-war commentary. You'll look like a fool if you try to do anything that looks like it's pro-war, you know? So it is kind of an anti-war comic strip during a period after everything has collapsed. They were done in a large size. I think they're even bigger than 11 by 17. I don't know if you ever saw it.

CASSELL: *No, but you've intrigued me. And it was a weekly?*

TRIMPE: Yeah, it was a weekly and there were other artists that were contributing at the same time. And then when the people that I was working with, the other artists who were working concurrently, when we stopped, another batch would get in there, so they did quite a bit of stuff over a fairly short period of time.

CASSELL: *And you wrote and drew it?*

TRIMPE: Yep. It was nice, but it's not the kind of thing that a major national newspaper would pick up.



Seal Of Approval: The History Of The Comics Code

Continuing Our Serialization Of The Landmark Book
By AMY KISTE NYBERG

A/E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *In Alter Ego #123 we presented Dr. Nyberg's introductory overview to her 1998 work whose title is utilized as that of this section. It was originally published by the University Press of Mississippi for its Studies in Popular Culture series, under the general editorship of M. Thomas Inge. With this issue we begin the reprinting of the main body of the book, with the addition of photos and illustrations not in the original volume. But first, here is the author's "University Profile" from the website of Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey:*

Amy K. Nyberg, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Communications
Department of Communication and the Arts

Profile: I joined the faculty of the Department of Communication in 1993, coming from the Ph.D. program in Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My background as a professional journalist enables me to share real-world experience with students in my writing, reporting, and editing courses. In addition, I teach a variety of theory and research courses, including Media Criticism and Women and the Media. Since the 2000-2001 academic year, I have served as the adviser to *The Setonian*, the official undergraduate newspaper of Seton Hall University.

My research area is comic books. My book *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* was published in 1998 by University Press of Mississippi. My scholarship also includes a number of articles and book chapters on comic books, ranging from a study of comic books commemorating September 11th, published in *Media Representations of September 11*, to an exploration of the ethical dimensions of the postwar comic book controversy, published in *Comics as Philosophy*.

Education:

- Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994
- M.A., Northern Illinois University, 1983; M.A., Northern Illinois University, 1986
- B.S., Central Michigan University, 1977.

Academic Distinctions:

- Three-time winner of the M. Thomas Inge Award for Comics Scholarship, presented by the Comic Art Comics Area of the National Popular Culture Association
- Consultant for a three-part documentary on superheroes (National Endowment for the Humanities)
- Keynote speaker for the Comic Book in Popular Culture Conference at Bowling Green University, November 2008

- Consultant for the Connecticut Historical Society exhibit on comic books
- Winner of a summer research stipend for research on the history of the National Cartoonists Society

The first edition of Seal of Approval is still available through the University Press of Mississippi at www.upress.state.ms.us Our thanks to William Biggins and Vijah Shah, the University Press' past and present acquisitions editors, for their help—with a special thank-you to Dr. M. Thomas Inge for his aid in arranging for this A/E edition. The text is © 1998 University Press of Mississippi.

Since Seal of Approval is, as Seton Hall University's website says, "a scholarly work on comic book censorship," the text is extensively "footnoted," though in the ALS style which lists book or article or author names, plus page numbers, between parentheses in the actual text: e.g., "(Hart 154-156)" refers to pp. 154-156 of whichever work by an author or editor named Hart is listed in the bibliography. When the parentheses contain only page numbers, that's because the name of the author, editor, and/or work is given in the main text almost immediately preceding the note. The bibliography will be printed at the conclusion of our serialization, several issues from now. (In addition, there are a few notes in the book that are treated as footnotes in the more traditional sense. Those are reprinted with the footnoted text at the bottom of the page on which the number appears.)

As we stated last issue, we have kept such spellings as "superhero," etc., and the non-capitalization of the term "comics code," as they appear in the published book. "E.C." is printed with periods, while "DC" is not, again as per the book. However, we revert to our own style in the captions, which are written by Ye Editor, who also chose the accompanying art spots. Naturally, neither Amy Nyberg nor the University Press of Mississippi is responsible for any error or opinion in said captions. In the very rare instances where Ye Ed felt a need to correct or quibble with a judgment or statement of fact in the main text, that is done—and, we hope, clearly labeled—in said captions. Oh, and a thank-you to Brian K. Morris for re-typing the entire book specifically for A/E.

Now on to...



Horsing Around

Amy Kiste Nyberg once described herself as "an avid equestrian [who] competes in horse shows in the New Jersey area." This photo appeared with her article on comics and juvenile delinquency which appeared in Roy Thomas' 2000 TwoMorrows book *The All-Star Companion* [Vol. 1]. Amy and her husband, comic book artist John Nyberg, live in Chatham, NJ.

Chapter I Comics, Critics, And Children's Culture

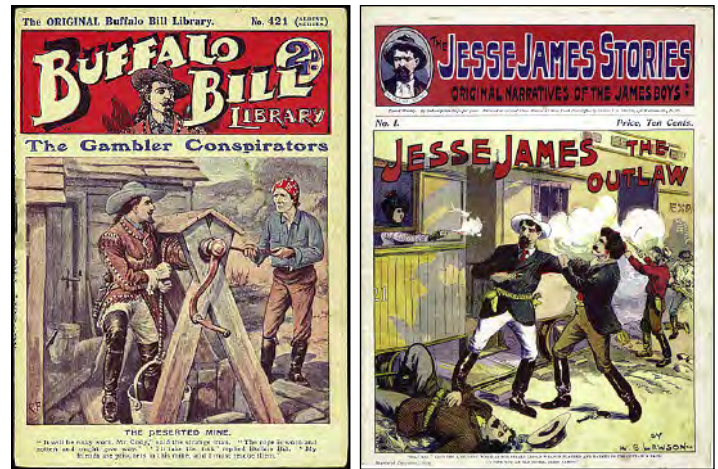
The audience for comic books in postwar America was much different from what it is today. Readers today are more likely to be older teens and young adults, mostly male. Comic book reading has become associated with the phenomenon of collecting comic books, and a specialized market catering to the collector has given rise to comic book specialty shops. But in the 1940s and 1950s, comic books were widely available at grocery stores, newsstands, and corner drug stores, and children were the primary audience. In the days before television, comic book reading was a major leisure activity for children. Partly because of the ubiquitous nature of the medium, children's fascination with comic books became a topic of concern for parents, teachers, and librarians and an area of investigation for researchers. The analysis that follows of the early criticism of comic books shows that, almost from the beginning, comic book reading was defined as a problem.

Studies of readership made by comic book publishers and academic researchers showed that nearly all children read comic books.¹ Comic books were most popular with children in the upper elementary grades; more than 90 percent of the children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades reported they read comic books regularly, averaging at least ten comics a month. For this age group, comic book reading appeared to be an activity enjoyed by



Hey, Kids! Comics!

A typical newsstand scene from the late 1950s/early '60s.
Thanks to Richard J. Arndt.



The Good, The Bad...

Covers of two (probably relatively late) dime novels. They started off lauding public heroes like Buffalo Bill, Kit Carson, et al.—and were soon also glorifying the exploits of outlaws like Jesse James and Billy the Kid. The *Jesse James Stories* cover seems to be a reprint of an earlier edition, though probably with the original cover art.

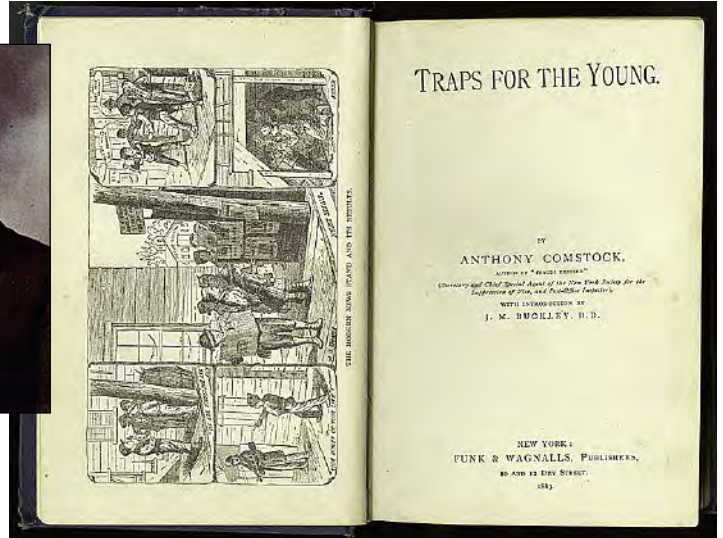
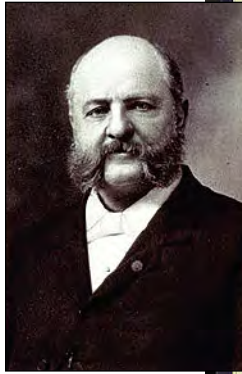
both boys and girls. Readership was lower among adolescents and adults; still, 30 percent of young adults reported reading comic books. Their popularity alarmed parents and educators. While the comic book was a new phenomenon, the problems it posed had been faced earlier with the introduction of the dime novel, the comic strip, and the film. Many of the complaints about comics were resurrected from earlier debates surrounding the introduction of these other media.

Dime novels, which were inexpensive pamphlets featuring simple stories recounting the adventures of explorers, cowboys, or soldiers, were first published during the Civil War. Historian Merle Curti notes that, although dime novels were intended for an audience of working-class adults, the stories held great appeal for children as well, so publishers began to produce dime novels specifically for the juvenile reader (172). As audiences became more jaded, the clean-cut heroes gave way to “bad” heroes like Jesse James and Billy the Kid. Next, publishers began offering sophisticated crime and detective stories (Hart 154-56). The decline in the literary quality of the stories, along with the addition of more lurid cover illustrations, led to an attack on dime novels by vice societies, formed in many major cities in the years following the Civil War. These groups originally targeted pornography, but after their vice campaigns eliminated or drove much of that material underground, the societies broadened the scope of their work (Broun and Leech 187). The leader in these efforts was

¹ See, for example, Nathan Abelson, “Comics Are a Serious Business,” *Advertising and Selling*, July 1946: 41; Nathan Abelson, “Comics Are a Serious Business; Part II of a Study of Comics Magazines,” *Advertising and Selling*, August 1946: 80-92; Paul Witty, Ethel Smith, and Anne Coomer, “Reading the Comics in Grades VII and VIII,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 33 (1942): 173-82; Paul Witty, “Children’s Interest in Reading the Comics,” *Journal of Experimental Education* 10 (1941): 100-109; Paul Witty and Anne Coomer, “Reading the Comics in Grades IV-VII,” *Educational Administration and Supervision* 28 (1942): 344-53; Paul Witty, “Reading the Comics – A Comprehensive Study,” *Journal of Experimental Education* 10 (1941): 105-9; Harvey Zorbaugh, “The Comics – There They Stand,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 18 (1944): 196-203.

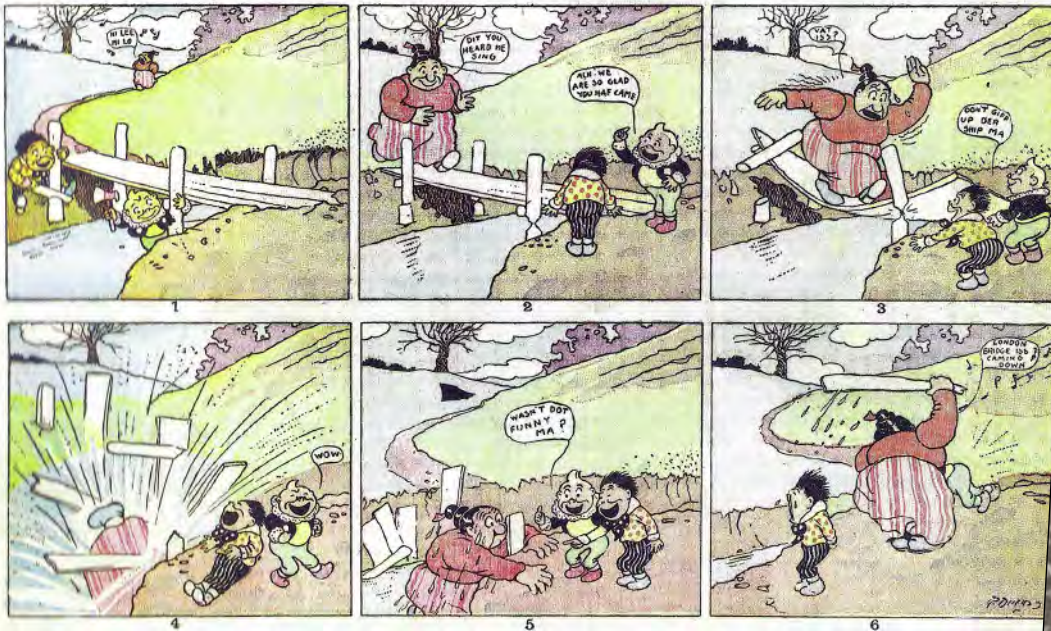
Anthony Comstock, the head of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. Comstock's attack on the dime novel, the topic of his book *Traps for the Young*, published in 1884, marks the first major controversy in the history of American children's culture.

The criticism of comic books also has its roots, not surprisingly, in the criticism of the comic strips that inspired the creation of the "funny books." Newspapers began printing Sunday supplements devoted exclusively to comics as early as 1894. Early comics were populated by characters drawn from the working class, usually immigrants, and their humor was very physical. The emphasis on vulgar humor (often featuring the misbehavior of urban slum children) combined with the crude production values of the time offended the literary and artistic sensibilities of the middle class. The disrespect for authority and the cruelty of the pranks depicted in the strips also concerned parents and educators, who worried about the impact that such depictions would have on children, and groups in several cities organized a highly focused protest against the comics. In her analysis of early comic strips, Elsa Nystrom notes that while such protests produced a flurry of activity between 1906 and 1911, the growing concern about the involvement of the United States in world affairs and the country's entry into World War I put an end to the crusade. In addition, the profitability and popularity of the comic strip ensured it would survive despite its critics (201-2).



...And The Ugly!
Anthony Comstock, and pages from his 1884 book *Traps for the Young*. Just so you know: Comstock also wrote a history of contraception.

The introduction of movies created a new target for censors. Film scholars Edward deGrazia and Roger Newman note that almost immediately after the introduction of the silent "photo-plays," concerns were raised about the social effects of films, and various groups began to denounce the irresponsibility of movie-makers. Immigrants and children were of special concern, since



Censors Of The World, Unite!
(Left:) By early in the 20th century, self-appointed comic strip censors were up in arms over such outrageousness as the disrespect for parental authority on display in Rudolph Dirks' popular comic strip *The Katzenjammer Kids*. This 1900 Sunday half-page was seen in Brian Walker's 2004 book *The Comics before 1945*. However, according to comics historian R.C. Harvey, and partly at odds with the statement in *Seal of Approval*, the first newspaper Sunday supplement devoted primarily to cartoons may have appeared as early as 1893 rather than '94—although that section (in Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*) also contained "jokes and humorous paragraphs." And Allan Holtz, proprietor of the online Stripper's Guide, says that for a supplement devoted "exclusively" to comics, "you'd have to jump well forward to about 1899-1900.... For instance, looking at 1899 editions of the *New York World* and *New York Journal* comics sections, each has a half-page to a full page devoted to text jokes interspersed with cartoons. That was typical." A minor point, and hardly crucial, but we wanted to show how virtually impossible it is to nail down certain "origins" dates precisely. [© the respective copyright holders.]
(Right:) In the early 1930s, the Legion of Decency and other groups were incensed by, among many other things, the scantiness of the attire of Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan in the 1934 MGM film *Tarzan and His Mate*. The outcome: the 1934 Production Code Administration, which forced Tarz and Jane to cover up in subsequent movies, and which would serve as a model for the Comics Code Authority two decades later. A publicity still was used as the cover of David Fury's 1994 volume *Kings of the Jungle: An Illustrated Reference to "Tarzan" on Screen and Television*. [© the respective copyright holders.]



WHAT DID NOTED AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIST **DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM** HAVE IN COMMON WITH BLOODTHIRSTY SOVIET DICTATOR **JOSEPH STALIN**?

WHY, THEY BOTH **HATED COMIC BOOKS!** HOWEVER, WE WON'T INDULGE IN CHEAP **WERTHAM-STYLE "GUILT BY ASSOCIATION."** **NO SIR!** WE'D NEVER STOOP THAT LOW!

INSTEAD, MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUE **DR. THOMAS INGE** WILL PROVIDE ACTUAL **DOCUMENTATION!** HIS ARTICLE, "**COMMUNISM AND THE AMERICAN COMIC BOOK,**" GIVES THE STRAIGHT SKINNY ON WHAT THE **COMMIES REALLY** THOUGHT ABOUT COMICS IN THE '50S!

TAKE IT AWAY, DOC!

(Clockwise, top to bottom:) *Captain America* #76 (May 1954), artist uncertain; *Sub-Mariner* #33 (April 1954), art by Bill Everett; *Fighting American* #3 (Aug. 1954), art by Joe Simon & Jack Kirby; *The Avenger* #1 (Feb. 1955), art by Bob Powell; *Samson* #14 (Aug. 1955), artist unknown; *Shock Illustrated* #1 (Sept. 1955), art by Jack Kamen. Splash illo at left adapted from *How Stalin Hopes We Will Destroy America* (1951), artist unknown, from Pictorial Media, Inc., with a Dr. Fredric Wertham photo cameo. [Respective covers © Marvel Characters, Inc.; William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc.; & the respective copyright holders.]

Communism And American Comic Books

by M. Thomas Inge

When the EC comic books were under attack by the moral crusaders in 1954, the response of publisher William M. Gaines, in at least one case, was to turn against them the weapons of satire. This took the form of a full-page advertisement drawn by Jack Davis and entitled "Are You a Red Dupe?" It appeared inside several of the EC titles in the fall of 1954.

The point of the parody was that the American Communist newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, had recently condemned comic books as capitalist trash and imperialist propaganda. It would follow, then, that those who opposed comic books, such as Fredric Wertham, Estes Kefauver, and the members of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, were allying themselves with the Communist point of view. The point was well taken—that those who seek to censor and suppress are adopting the tactics of a totalitarian state—but it was largely lost on the reformers, who probably lacked the ability to appreciate satire, especially that directed at themselves.



Are You A Red Dupe?

(Above:) Jack Davis illustrated this EC house ad from *Haunt of Fear* #26 (July 1954). It was probably written by Bill Gaines himself, although perhaps editor Al Feldstein had a hand in it, as well. [© 2014, EC Comics.]

The ad included a quotation from the July 13, 1953, issue of *The Daily Worker* which attacked the role of "so-called 'comics' in brutalizing American youth, the better to prepare them for military service in implementing our government's aims of world domination, and to accept the atrocities now being perpetrated by American soldiers and airmen in Korea under the flag of the United Nations." I have searched through that issue of the newspaper, as well as the weeks before and after, and I have been unable to find the precise quotation referred to by Gaines, or indeed any article having to do with comic books. Where Gaines got the quotation is unclear. This does not mean, however, that the Communist Party did not adopt a hard line against comic books and issue orders against them directly from Moscow. I came across evidence of this some years ago.

During the month of August in 1985, I gave lectures in American literature and culture at the annual Poznan Summer School for Students of English

Is This Tomorrow?

(Left:) Scary propaganda comic published in the U.S. a couple of years after the end of World War II, as the Cold War began to freeze into place. [© 1947 The Catechetical Guild.]

A Mask, A Cape, And Steve Perrin

Bill Schelly Chats With STEVE PERRIN, Prolific Writer For Many Classic Fanzines Of The 1960s

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris



Steve Perrin,
high school photo.

Introduction

When I got back into fandom in 1991 and began my research into its history, I got in touch with Ronn Foss, and Foss led me to Steve Perrin. Of course, I was aware that Steve was a prolific and talented writer whose work had appeared in many fanzines of the early 1960s, such as *Fantasy Illustrated*, *Fantasy Hero*, *Yancy Street Journal*, *Jeddak*, *Action Hero*, and his own *Mask and Cape*. Perhaps his most stellar achievement was his collaboration with Ronn Foss on "The Black Phantom," an early—probably the first—African-American costumed hero of the fanzines. But, as I was about to learn when I interviewed him by phone on December 4, 2011, there was a lot I didn't know about Steve and his various fannish activities. —Bill Schelly.

BILL SCHELLY: Hello, how are you doing?

STEVE PERRIN: You know, breathing, moving, it works. Rolling dice, typing.

BS: "Rolling dice"?

PERRIN: Oh, yeah. I play role-playing games. I've got one this afternoon, after we talk.

BS: Oh, I see, yeah. Well, let's get started with an obvious question. When and where were you born?

PERRIN: I was born in the Los Angeles area on January 22, 1946.

BS: What did your dad do for a living?

PERRIN: Back then, he owned his own company, the Topper Pants Hanger Manufacturing Company. Shortly, either during the war or immediately afterwards, he came up with a design for a wire pants hanger which was very nice and cheap to make. However, it had the slight problem; it depended on people wearing cuffs on their pants, which was the fashion at the time. Among the many things that killed that company was the fashion for not having cuffs on your pants.

BS: Did he stay in that sort of business?

PERRIN: Well, my father was 47 when I was born. I have a couple of siblings who are quite a bit older than I am. I used to call myself "an afterthought" until my dad pointed out there wasn't a lot of thought involved.

BS: [laughs] Okay, you were born in the Los Angeles area. And did you grow up there?

PERRIN: We moved to Santa Barbara when I was about six. That's where I grew up through high school. And that's where I got into comics fandom.

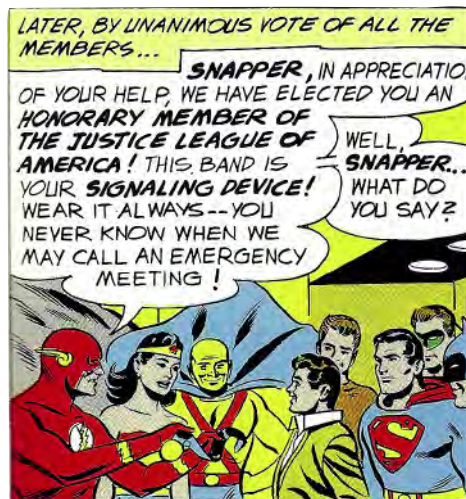
BS: How did your interest in comics start?

PERRIN: Through newspaper comic strips. From there, I discovered comic books. I read a lot of the *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* and *Uncle Scrooge*, a lot of things like *Johnny Mack Brown* and *Gene Autry* and *Roy Rogers* comic books because I knew them from television. I had a big thing for war comics for a while; *Star Spangled War Stories* and so forth. I was young and still didn't have much money, so I couldn't get everything I wanted. Then I pretty much decided that comic books were kid stuff and got into reading science-fiction.

BS: How did you make that shift?

PERRIN: Initially I read some *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet* books, young adult or essentially young teenager books. I was a big fan of those. Then a schoolmate named Joe Lansing turned me on to

people like Robert Heinlein and Andre Norton. I read a bunch of



Back From The Future

Steve Perrin c. 1957–58, about when he began reading more science-fiction than comic books. Soon, the Schwartz-edited DC titles, especially the debut of the "Justice League of America" in *The Brave and the Bold* #28 (March 1960), drew him back to the four-color fold. Script by Gardner F. Fox; art by Mike Sekowsky & Bernard Sachs. Thanks to Steve for both photos on this page. [B&B cover © DC Comics.]





Playing Doctor

Steve contributed a prose story of DC's "Dr. Mid-Nite" (see below) to Parley Holman's *Spotlite* #2 (1962), which was complemented with art by Ronn Foss, who also drew the cover. The same issue featured an article on "The Black Hood" by Howard Keltner, and one on "Captain Comet" by Roy Thomas. [Dr. Mid-Nite & Captain Comet TM & © DC Comics; other material © Steve Perrin.]

their books, and branched out from there. I didn't get into Robert E. Howard much until college.

BS: What rekindled your interest in comics?

PERRIN: It was the appearance of the "Justice League of America" in *The Brave and the Bold* #28. This had been a concept that I had always fascinated me as far back as I can remember. Why not have all these super-heroes get together? Somehow, that just grabbed me.

BS: How did you get started in fandom?

PERRIN: In the letter column in *The Brave and the Bold* #35, the second "Hawkman" try-out issue, they had people like Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas writing in and gave their full addresses. I think that may have started a lot as far as comic fandom is concerned. [NOTE: The other two letters in that historically important column were from Ron Haydock and Ronnie Graham. —Bill.]

BS: It did, for sure. And that was your specific entry point?

PERRIN: Yeah, because I wrote to Roy Thomas and he responded, and we started a correspon-

dence that went on for about a year or so. He actually mailed me [on loan] some copies of *All-Star Comics* and so forth.

BS: And what was your first issue of *Alter-Ego*? Did you get number one or did you come in on #2?

PERRIN: I got the number one. Yeah, when I first started writing to Roy, they were just putting the first one together, so I got a copy of that. [NOTE: B&B #35, the first of three "Hawkman" issues, hit the newsstands in the first week of March 1961; *Alter-Ego* #1 was mailed out by Jerry Bails on March 28. —Bill.]

BS: How did you begin to think about contributing to fanzines?

PERRIN: Well, I was in my late high school years at this point, my junior, senior years in high school. I was already interested in being a writer. I had already set that as a goal. So switching over to writing comic book scripts and stories about super-heroes was just a matter of a slight change of subject.

BS: Were you on the school paper and stuff like that?

PERRIN: My senior year, yeah. I was also in theatre arts in my junior and senior year.

BS: I had read somewhere that you were a drama major when you went to San Francisco State, so I was going to ask how your interest in theatre came about.

PERRIN: I signed up for a couple courses at the Santa Barbara summer school, Auto Mechanics and Theatre Arts. That's when I got into theatre arts. There was a very good drama teacher, Mr. John Duerr. He later became a vice principal of the high school. I fell in love with theatre at that point, and continued with it into the regular school year. It became my main focus, besides writing and comic books, for my junior and senior years of high school.

BS: Were you an actor?

PERRIN: Yep, I did bit parts. In between junior and senior years, I did summer theatre. In *Bye Bye Birdie*, I played about every bit part there was in that show. Then I finished my high school thespian career doing the Stage Manager in *Our Town*.

BS: Were you also thinking about writing plays?

PERRIN: No, although I'm sure I picked up my ear for dialogue during that time. But by that time, I had already gotten into doing fan stuff, so that's mostly what my writing was at that point.

BS: When did you graduate from high school and go on to San Francisco State?

PERRIN: 1963.



P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA ⚡

Fawcett Collectors of America

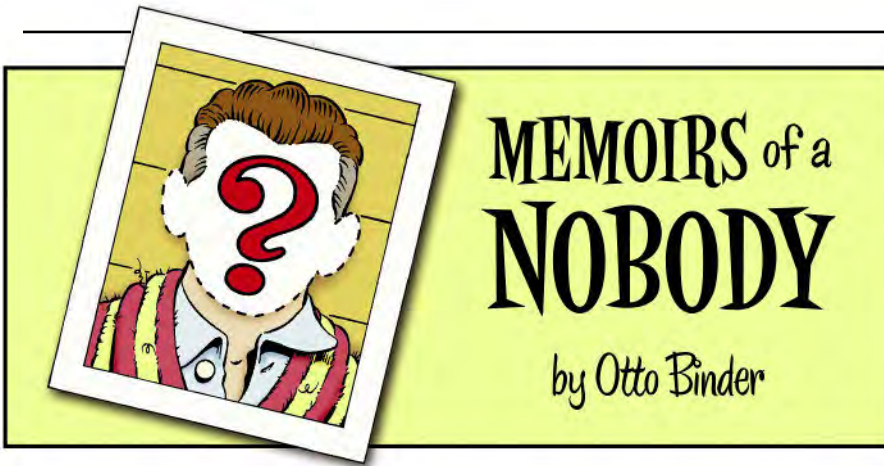
#183
May 2014

Memoirs of a Nobody
plus *Revolt of the Comics*

BULLETMAN
THE FLYING DETECTIVE



Ⓐ



MEMOIRS of a NOBODY

by Otto Binder

Part V

Abridged & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

FCA EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *Otto Oscar Binder (1911-1974), the prolific science-fiction and comic book writer renowned for authoring over half of the Marvel Family saga for Fawcett Publications, wrote *Memoirs of a Nobody* in 1948 at the age of 37, during what was arguably the most imaginative period within the repertoire of "Captain Marvel" stories.*

Aside from intermittent details about himself, Binder's capricious chronicle resembles very little in the way of anything that is indeed autobiographical. Unearthed several years ago from his file materials at Texas A&M University, *Memoirs* is self-described by its author as "ramblings through the untracked wilderness of my mind." Binder's potpourri of stray philosophical beliefs, pet peeves, theories, and anecdotes were written in freewheeling fashion and devoid of any charted course—other than allowing his mind to flow with no restricting parameters. The abridged and edited manuscript—serialized here within the pages of FCA—will nonetheless provide glimpses into the idiosyncratic and fanciful mind of Otto O. Binder.

In this fifth excerpt, Otto philosophizes on war and peace of mind in a chapter entitled "Whither! Whither! Who's Got the Whither?"

—P.C. Hamerlinck

Whither the human race? Damned if I know. Assuming anyone cares, is the human race going forwards or backwards? If it's going forwards, where is that exactly? Toward more machines? Bigger cities? Better revolutions? Greater famines? Grander wars?

Speaking of wars, I understand there have been far more years in which war has been going on in the world, than years of peace. [Some] will tell you in a conspiratorial tone that wars are always caused by "international bankers" ... [or] a small select group of military Machiavellis who sit behind closed doors and decide exactly when and where a war should start ... or, best of all, that way off in Tibet, there exists a group of diabolical masterminds who really rule the Earth and keep the human race fighting as a smoke screen.

There are no such mythical "groups" who control destiny. The world, I believe, is far too big and complex a place for a few men to shove around as they wish. Even Hitler and Mussolini were only figureheads behind much more huge [sic] and overwhelming forces. The true motives behind wars are incredibly complex. So complex that I for one believe that wars happen not because they are planned by human minds, but because human minds can't seem to stem the tide of war-fever that periodically grips some segment of Earth.

The most cynical explanation of war, of course, is that wars are nature's way of keeping the human race from running riot like rabbits over the face of the earth. Or that war is the old law-of-the-jungle instinct in us, needing an outlet.

In this bad old world of periodic wars and depressions and inflations and ideologies and what-not, how can a person best keep his balance and enjoy life?

I think my life is fairly simple. I have few interests outside of my writing, my home and family, and my hobbies. I strive for security but I eschew over-ambition. I am a bit in doubt of the general American creed of "getting ahead" because I've never been able to figure just where "ahead" is. I wonder if the renowned and famous people of this world really enjoy life? Do you think a man with ten million dollars, a fine mansion, a yacht, six mistresses, and a stable of horses really enjoys life?

Damned right he does!



Dark Comedy

Otto Binder, who ruminates over war in this installment of *Memoirs of a Nobody*, wrote the above "Bulletman" tale ("Comedy of Crime!" from *Master Comics* #38, May 1943; art by the Jack Binder shop) while World War II raged on overseas. Otto had previously held an editorial position in Fawcett's comics department for six months after editor Ed Herron was drafted into the Army; but by June of 1942 Otto had returned to full-time freelancing for Fawcett, producing scripts that succeeding year exclusively for the publisher. [Bulletman TM & © DC Comics.]

What A Riot!

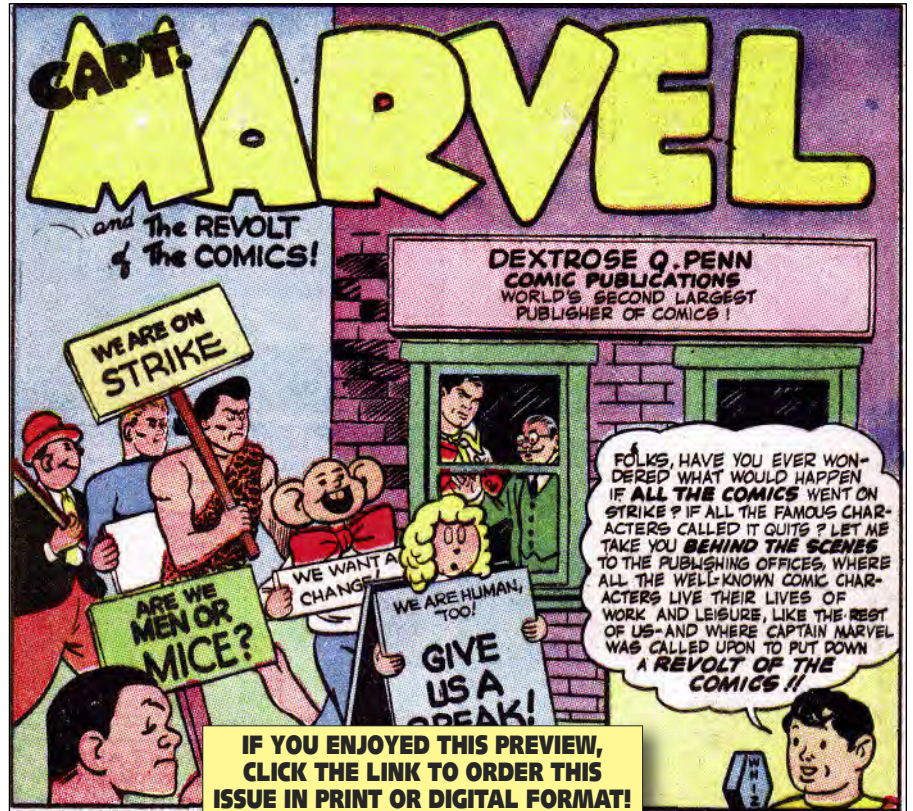
Captain Marvel & The Revolt Of The Comics

by John G. Pierce

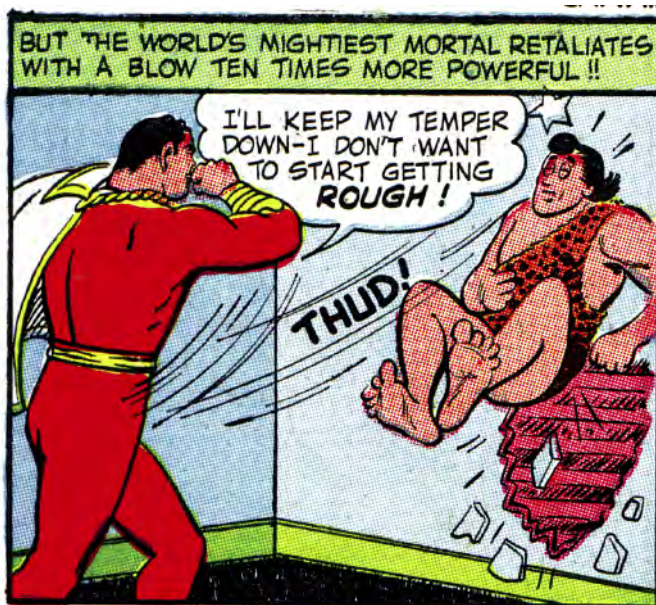
Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

There was a time when newspaper comics strips were an intrinsic part and parcel of life in the United States (not to mention other countries). Features such as *Dick Tracy*, *Flash Gordon*, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Little Orphan Annie*, *Tarzan*, *Superman*, *Batman*, *The Phantom*, *The Gumps*, and numerous others were daily reading staples for the multitudes. In addition, it should be noted that many later comic book artists had their start by copying the strips during their childhood.

Today, the strips seem to be on life-support, as more and more newspapers go out of business, and there is far more competition for a reader's attention. However, life-support does not equal death, and some features are finding new life online. Most strips today are humorous in nature, with adventure strips (*The Phantom*, *Prince Valiant*, *Spider-Man*) and soap operas (*Judge Parker*, *Rex Morgan*, *Mary Worth*) being rarities. Still, the strips survive and entertain what must be a fair amount of readers each day, particularly the humor strips with their sometimes gentle, sometimes biting, commentary on daily life and human foibles. Even at their lowest ebb, they probably still have more readers than most current comic books. And when was the last time you saw an issue of *X-Men* taped to an office door or a cubicle wall?



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King Of The Bungle

In a battle you thought you'd never see, Captain Marvel sends Tarzan—er, Zartan flying. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]



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entures #22 - March 1943 -
"Monster Society of Evil"
ps of several popular comic
896 Yellow Kid, sometimes
e an appearance! Art by C.C.
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Woman appeared in a
people saw them there
a good thing!)

f an earlier era of
er Otto Binder
he form of one of his
rtal, entitled "Captain
in *Marvel Adventures*

h Marvel. Although it is
perman, strictly
rect imitation intended

for strictly humorous purposes, such as the material *Mad* would later produce (including Captain Marbles taking on Superduperman in *Mad* #4, April-May 1953). Nor was Captain Marvel a pastiche (some of the best examples of super-hero