If this column doesn’t appeal to you, don’t blame me. Steve Lewis thought some readers might be interested in my latest book, even though it has nothing to do with our genre. So I’ll start off this month recycling the book’s introduction, which I believe conveys what it’s about, and reveals an aspect of your columnist that may surprise many who think of me as just a mystery work.

...  

If you leave out the accident of my birth, the origin of They Called the Shots dates back to 1952. The Korean war was raging overseas, HUAC and Senator Joe McCarthy were raging on the home front, the blacklist was on full tilt, and I was nine years young, living in Roselle Park, New Jersey.

One night my parents, taking me along, went out to an appliance store to buy their first television set. It was, if memory serves, an Admiral with a 12-inch screen. The price was around $225 or $250. For the next several years that set drew me to it like a magnet.

In the early Fifties the major movie studios considered TV the enemy, offering for nothing the same product that theaters charged admission for. They wouldn’t allow their old films to be shown on the small screen, and in their current pictures they often wouldn’t allow a set amid the furniture of a living-room scene.

Growing up in the New York City area, I had access to seven channels: the CBS, NBC and ABC flagship stations (Channels 2, 4 and 7 respectively), the short-lived DuMont network, plus three local independents. With the majors boycotting the medium and the number of made-for-TV series rather small, TV programmers starved for material on film had to fall back on the smaller fry among movie-making companies, mainly Republic, Monogram and PRC.

During the Thirties and Forties those companies had put out an endless stream of B pictures, primarily but not exclusively Westerns, and Republic had also offered dozens of cliffhanger serials. This was the product, interspersed with Hopalong Cassidy movies (out of which William Boyd, the only actor to play Hoppy, made megamillions by buying the rights to those flicks and licensing them to stations across the country) and early made-for-TV series like The Lone Ranger and The Cisco Kid that kept me glued in front of the set for hours every evening. I became a certified telefreak.

On that tiny screen I watched movies featuring the exploits of various Western stars of previous decades over and over. Some were trio pictures with groups like The Three Mesquiteers and The Range Busters and The Rough Riders. Most starred a single hero: Gene Autry, Eddie Dean, Buck Jones, Ken Maynard, Ken Maynard (Ken’s less successful but perhaps more talented brother), Tim McCoy, Jack Randall, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers and of course the young John Wayne.

I got to the point where I could identify at sight dozens of the actors in B Westerns who usually fell to the heroes bullets or fists — Roy Barcroft, Tristram Coffin, Kenne Duncan, I. Stanford Jolley, Charles King, John Merton, Marshall Reed, Hal Taliaferro, Harry Woods, just to name a few at random. Eventually I caught on that the person usually named in a picture’s final credit was the less successful but perhaps more talented brother, Tim McCoy, Jack Randall, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers and of course the young John Wayne.

As I grew older I lost interest in shoot-em-ups and cliffhangers, considering them beneath the few at random. Eventually I caught on that the person usually named in a picture’s final credit is the less successful but perhaps more talented brother, Tim McCoy, Jack Randall, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers and of course the young John Wayne.

Years slid by, I completed college and law school, passed the bar, the consideration them beneath the few at random. Eventually I caught on that the person usually named in a picture’s final credit is the less successful but perhaps more talented brother, Tim McCoy, Jack Randall, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers and of course the young John Wayne.

And
then, slowly but surely, a strange thing happened. I became interested in those old movies again. I had the pleasure of meeting in their golden years some of the actors whose younger incarnations I had watched for hours on end, magnetized by that 12-inch screen.

Most important of all, I began to meet and become friends with some of the men whose names were familiar to me from the final credits of those pictures. The ones who called the shots. The directors. I got to watch their films again, sometimes sitting beside them. I got to listen to their stories. Eventually I began to write about them.

This book is the culmination of that process. It took me thousands of hours of viewing time and hundreds of hours of writing time but in my twilight years I still consider the time well spent. I hope I’ve communicated what I’ve gotten from all those films, and from the people who made them, in the following pages.

But perhaps I can spell out here what I’ve looked for, and often found, in pictures of this sort. Reduced to two words, what the first-rate films contain and what the first-rate directors infuse into their films is visual imagination or, in two more words, visual excitement. This quality is the alpha and omega of the kind of movies discussed here.

Each chapter is self-contained and can be read separately. But many also throw light on other chapters, and to help readers navigate among them, the first time in any chapter the name of a director is mentioned who is the subject of an earlier or later chapter, that name is highlighted.

For example, in the chapter on William Witney you can see highlighted names like John English or Alan James or Ray Taylor from Bill’s point of view, and later you can turn to the chapters on those men and see Bill from their perspective.

The directors I knew best tend to get the longest and most quote-filled chapters but, because they contributed so much to this book, I want to single them out for mention: in the order of their births, Spencer Gordon Bennet (1893-1987), Joseph H. Lewis (1907-2000), Thomas Carr (1907-1997), and my closest Hollywood friend, Bill Witney (1915-2002). A few others covered here, like Oliver Drake (1903-1991) and R.G. Springsteen (1904-1989), I knew but not all that well. Others, who died too soon, I never had the pleasure of meeting.

Every director covered here is dead, and most of them died before the beginning of this century. In a sense this book is an assortment of flowers on their graves. In another sense it brings them back, I hope, to life.

...While we’re on the subject of shoot-em-ups, a reader of my last month’s column asked if any of John Creasey’s contributions to that branch of literature got published in the USofA. The answer is Yes. War on the Lazy-K, as by William K. Reilly — one of three bylines under which Creasey turned out (if I’ve counted right) 29 smokeroos for low-on-the-totem-pole English houses like Wright & Brown and Stanley Paul — first appeared in London in 1941, amid the carnage of World War II, and came out over here five years later under the imprint of Phoenix Press.

Yes, the same Phoenix Press that at the same time was presenting to an indifferent world the novels of that incomparable wackadoodle Harry Stephen Keeler. I am the proud owner of a copy of the Reilly opus, picked up for 50 cents at a YMCA book fair in St. Louis twenty or more years ago. Another copy wound up in the hands of Bill Pronzini, who devotes a couple of pages to it in his tribute to badly written Westerns, Six-Gun in Cheek (1997).

When I was in Wales back in pre-euro days I pungled up 50 pence apiece for each of several Creasey cactus epics published only in England, but that’s another story. Let’s stick to the one that made it across the pond.

This one actually has a plot of sorts, but what I find most amazing is that a writer who had never yet visited the U.S. and knew next to nothing about the old West could hammer out so many books of this type in a few days apiece. The narrative passages of Lazy-K are readable enough, although pockmarked with exclamation points and lacking the urgency of the Inspector West and Dr. Palfrey novels Creasey wrote during the same war years.

But Gad, the dialogue! Just about every one of the horde of characters in this book speaks in dialect—the same wacky dialect for the whole passel of ’em! “Why’n hell can’t yuh old-timers stop arguin’ among yourselves?” “C’n yuh use a drink?” “Yuh ain’t got a touch of whiskey with yuh, by any chance?” “Yuh’ve heerd me.” The only characters who are spared this form of dialect are the Mexicans. “Thees ees a surprise, Kennedy. I was told that you wair dead.”

“He wanted to be kept hidden until after Deegby was gone. But undair cover he negotiated yuh, by any chance?” “Yuh’ve heerd me.” The only characters who are spared this form of dialect are the Mexicans. “Thees ees a surprise, Kennedy. I was told that you wair dead.”

...
At least one other among Creasey’s posse of pistol-smokers was published over here, but not in book form. *Hidden Range* (1946), published in England as by Tex Riley, takes up virtually the entire February 1950 issue of *Real Western Stories*, one of the Columbia chain of ultra-low-budget pulps edited by Robert A. W. Lowndes. I tipped over a copy of this one in a secondhand bookstore somewhere in Ohio and snapped it for another 50 cents.

A quick look at the invaluable FictionMags Index website revealed a curious fact I hadn’t been aware of before. A year after Lowndes used *Hidden Range* in *Real Western Stories*, he used the exact same novel, this time retitled *Forgotten Range*, in the February 1951 issue of *Western Action*, another Columbia pulp. He must have been desperate for material that month!

But could the Index be wrong here? According to other Creasey bibliographies in print and online, *Forgotten Range* is a different book, published in England as by Tex Riley in 1947. It strikes me as more credible that this is the title Lowndes ran early in 1951. In any event, he had earlier run another Creasey shoot-em-up, this time under the William K. Reilly byline, *Brand Him for Boothill!* (*Western Action*, July 1949), but what title and pen name this one sported in England remains a mystery.

A word which brings us back to what this column is supposed to be about.

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Hundreds of Creasey’s crime novels were published in the U.S. from the early 1950s until well after his death in 1973, but only nine appeared here before he became a top name in the genre. Eight of these, chronicling the earliest exploits of Raffles-like John Manmering, a.k.a. The Baron, appeared under Creasey’s Anthony Morton byline between 1937 and 1940, although for some obscure reason the character’s *nom de thief* on this side of the pond was Blue Mask.

The ninth, and the only book to bear Creasey’s own name on its spine until he became established over here years later, was *Legion of the Lost* (1944), one of the early espionage adventures of Dr. Palfrey and his colleagues, offered by a publishing house called Stephen Daye, Inc., which seems to have vanished into the mists a few seconds after it was born.

At a time when I had little or no idea who Creasey was, I found a nice copy of this rarity in an old used bookstore in Elizabeth, N.J. that was a favorite hangout of mine in my formative years. What did the book set me back? One quarter. A wise investment, yes?

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### A Tribute to VICTOR BERCH (1924-2015) by Kenneth Johnson.

**Posted by Steve under Obituaries / Deaths Noted**

A Tribute to VICTOR BERCH (1924-2015) by Kenneth Johnson.

I was informed by his son that Victor Berch died on Friday, October 30, 2015. He was 91. Victor is well known to many people in the collecting community and he will be sorely missed.

Victor had a massive collection that filled his house from top to bottom.

He collected dime novels and was well known among those collectors, being close personal friends with Edward Le Blanc and Ed Levy, of Charlton Publications.

He collected paperbacks of every kind, including much early porn, having amassed large quantities of Greenleaf, Brandon House and Olympia Press pbs, as well as many obscure soft-core pbs from the early 60s. One of his specialties was Lancer Books and he had a massive collection of Lancer and all its companion imprints.

He collected pulp. I first met him through pulp fan Will Murray. Victor had initiated a correspondence with Will and eventually, realizing that they both lived in eastern Massachusetts, they decided to meet for lunch. Will called me afterwards and told me what a fascinating person Victor was, so I expressed an interest in meeting him, too. When Will mentioned my name to him, Victor said “Is that the Ken Johnson who did the SF Pornography index?” and expressed a desire to meet me. Will brought him to my place and after admiring my somewhat modest collection and chatting about obscure bibliographic matters, Victor sat back and asked “So, what can I do to help you with your research?”

This, I learned, was typical of Victor. He loved helping other people with their research and was always generous with his time and expertise. A few years back, some people researching Louisa May Alcott made a breakthrough in identifying the potboiler stories she had written at the beginning of her career. Eventually several books were compiled from these stories; it is my understanding that the final volume consisted entirely of stories located by Victor Berch.

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(Footnotes added in the text)
Victor was born in 1924. He served in the Merchant Marine in World War II. He graduated from Brandeis University with a Master’s Degree in Mediterranean Studies. In his course of study he learned to read and/or speak Spanish, French, Latin, Greek (ancient and modern), Russian, Arabic and Hebrew. I believe he could also read Egyptian Hieroglyphics. None of this prepared him for his professional career, however. In his wayward youth, Victor had been a book scout for George Gloss of the Brattle Book Store. It was that expertise that got him the job of Rare Book Librarian at Brandeis in 1966.

Victor was married and had two sons. His wife Sarah died several years ago, of Huntington’s Disease.

Victor had a health scare in 2007 and decided to begin disposing of his collection. A collector from New York bought all his dime novels and pulp magazines and wrote him a five-figure check. I got first crack at his paperbacks. He sold me his sleazy digest PBs at far below what he could have gotten for them on eBay, but he knew that I would put them to good use in my research. Bruce Black flew out from Illinois and bought 8 or 10 boxes of paperbacks, mostly porn. Even after that there was still a ton of stuff there and it took several more visits before I finally reached bottom. There was still so much stuff left that it hardly looked like anything was gone.

Unfortunately, Victor fell down the stairs in 2008 and broke his hip. He was in rehab for a couple of months, then moved into an assisted living facility in Brookline. He never fully recovered and became less mobile over time. He never lost his enthusiasm for research, however, and continued feeding information to Al Hubin for his Crime Fiction updates.

About 20 years ago Victor discovered that the Library of Congress had microfilmed a large amount of old magazines, including many early pulps. Through inter-library loan he had Brandeis borrow a huge amount of them and printed out the contents pages. He compiled a few indexes of short-run titles and published them in the Pulp APA but the bulk of them remained untapped. He passed them on to me when he started dumping his collection. For the last 6 years I’ve been slowly borrowing the same microfms, annotating those contents pages, and sending the info to FictionMags. So in many ways Victor’s research efforts will continue to bear fruit for years to come.

This hastily written tribute can barely express how much his friendship meant to me. I have gratefully acknowledged his help in all of my paperback indexes. I have become a better bibliographer from his example but my expertise still pales in comparison. He has inspired many of us to do better work, dig deeper, and leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of knowledge. He will be missed.

Editorial Comment: I learned the sad news from Al Hubin in an email from him waiting for me when I got up this morning. I knew Victor was slowing down, but I heard from him several times over the summer, always cheerful and asking how I was doing. While his death wasn’t surprising news, it was still a shock, as it always is when someone you have called a friend for over 20 years passes away.

Here’s a list of the projects and articles Victor did for Mystery*File over the years, some his own projects, some in collaboration with others, including myself. Some have needed some updating for a while now. The fault is mine, not Victor’s.

Pulp Author CHARLES W. TYLER, by Victor A. Berch.

MASTERPIECES OF MYSTERY: A Bibliographical Account, Presented by Victor A. Berch.

THE STORY OF ALLEN HYMSON, by Victor A. Berch & Allen J. Hubin.


Victor Berch on ROBERT EDMOND ALTER.

More on Phyllis Gordon Demarest from Victor Berch.

A NOTE ON THE WORD ‘DETECTIVE’ by Victor A. Berch.

WHO WAS ARTHUR MALLORY? – A 76-Year Old Pseudonym Revealed, by Victor A. Berch.


A Checklist of HARPER’S SEALED MYSTERY SERIES– Compiled by Victor A. Berch.

A Checklist of Aldine’s Tip Top Detective Tales, by Victor A. Berch.
THE BACKWARD REVIEWER
William F. Deeck


James Yeats Biddle, professor of horticulture, University of California at Berkeley, accompanied by Kay Ritchie, not a girl reporter but a newspaper woman, is on his way to give a rather dull speech, although he doesn’t think it will be so, on “The Flora of the Golden Gate International Exposition.”

They encounter death on the San Francisco Bay Bridge as a careening car narrowly misses them and then crashes into the bridge, causing the bodies of two Japanese men to be thrown from the car. One of the Japanese had already been dead before the accident, but the other dies as a result of the inhalation of cyanide gas rather than the crash.

If this information had not come to light, a naive reader might think it was all Biddle’s fault. After all, he made an illegal U-turn on the bridge and his attention to his driving was such that he could see Miss Ritchie’s eyes shining up at him, her lips slightly parted. Either she was in his lap facing him or he had his head turned at a rather uncomfortable angle. Whichever, it was certainly failure to pay full time and attention to driving.

The police are convinced that there was only one murder victim and that his murderer died in the crash. Professor Biddle himself is not very curious about the murder, or murders, even though he discovers — and, of course, keeps to himself — a rubber band in the crashed car that probably was attached to the choke to keep the car moving. It is not until he discovers that someone had been messing about with the olive trees he had had transplanted on Treasure Island for the San Francisco Exposition that he becomes involved in the case.

The novel is not well clued and the murder motive seems far-fetched. Biddle, however, is an engaging character and would have been a great deal more engaging if half the novel did not dwell on the joys and sorrows brought about by his having fallen in love at first sight with Kay Ritchie.

Among his other quirks are a distaste for mystery novels, even though he had read some because of his great admiration for Woodrow Wilson, whose favorite relaxation was reading mysteries, and an abhorrence of split infinitives, that hobgoblin of small minds. Kay splits infinitives invariably in her writings, but for Biddle these have a peculiar charm. Indeed, at one point this habit saves his life.


Bio-Bibliographic Notes: John Mersereau (1898-1989) was the author of one other bone fida detective novel, that being The Corpse Comes Ashore (Lippincott, 1941), but according to Hubin, Professor Biddle is not in it. Mersereau wrote one other novel that is included in Hubin, but that only marginally: The Whispering Canyon (Clode, 1926), which was made into a silent film of the same title.

Says the AFI page for the latter: “Returning from the war to his father’s California sawmill, Bob Cameron takes up with Hinky Dink, a cocky Englishman and man of the road. Ignoring a ‘no trespassing’ sign on Cameron’s property, Hinky is caught in a steel trap; Cameron, seeking aid, is threatened by Eben Beauregard, an old southerner, but the appearance of Antonia (Tony) Lee, Bob’s childhood friend, quells his temper. Bob learns that Lew Selby, an unscrupulous timber baron, is trying to buy Tony’s land and that his father has been murdered. At the suggestion of Hinky (who has innocently fallen asleep on the riverbank), Bob and Tony pool their interests against Selby; he attempts to prevent their passage through land belonging to Medbrook, an eccentric; and Gonzales, Selby’s henchman, kidnaps Tony. Medbrook blows up the dam, and Selby tries to buy out the couple; but the plot is thwarted by the timely intervention of Hinky Dink.”

Much more on the author himself, also the writer of a large number of pulp stories, can be found on the Rue Morgue Press website. Briefly, from the online FictionMaps Index: “Born in Manistique, Michigan; family moved to California in 1907; lived variously in California until enlisting in the Navy in 1941; edited a navy recruitment magazine in Washington D.C. after the war; moved to Santa Barbara, then to Mexico, and finally to Forsythe, Missouri, where he died;
Western Review: TOM W. BLACKBURN – Short Grass.


For no good reason I can think of, Tom Blackburn (1913–1992) is not included in the second edition of 20th Century Western Writers, and he should be. I am surprised that he is not. He was a prolific writer of westerns for the pulps, hardcovers, paperbacks, movies and a number of 50s and 60s TV series. His career began perhaps with "Wagontongue’s Last Town-Tamer" which appears in Star Western, February 1940, his earliest entry in the online FictionMags Index.

His wikipedia entry appears here, where you will learn that he may be best remembered as the person who wrote the lyrics to "The Ballad of Davy Crockett." Among several other TV series he wrote for are Maverick, Bronco, and Daniel Boone. It’s quite a résumé.

And as a western, Short Grass is quite a novel, impressive in both its exposition and impact, with (in my opinion) as much emphasis on “novel” as “western,” and perhaps more. It starts out in flurry of action, and it barely ever lets up – perhaps only in the middle, with an ending that if properly filmed, would be a humdinger of a movie. (I’ll get back to this shortly.)

Steve Llewellyn is the primary protagonist, a wandering cowpoke – if not gunman, a drifter whose past we never learn much about – and an innocent bystander, if you will, who gets caught up in a shooting incident in a saloon between two other fellows. He’s wounded and – we’ve read this before – is soon found by a woman who takes him home to recover.

Things happen fast in this book. Other westerns may draw the next step out for any number of chapters, but Steve doesn’t wait nearly that long. He kisses Sharon Lynch on page 36, and in the Dell paperback I read, there still are almost 200 pages yet to come. The course of romance does not come easily, though. Steve believes in the use of his gun. Sharon does not. She does believe violence is the solution to anything. Not a good combination, and once she sees what Steve is capable of, she rejects him, and they part.

As a synopsis, this is too short and far too easy. The two are adults, and their behavior, their thoughts, their actions, their problems, are those of adults. When they meet later, in Kansas, not Texas, five years have passed, Steve has become a homesteader, Sharon has remarried (to a man too weak for her) and the local marshal (Ord Keown) has an eye on her.

Besides the complications a love triangle (well, yes, a quadrangle) can bring, the past that both Steve and Sharon have fled comes back to haunt them again in the form of rancher Hal Fenton. The latter is someone would not mind gaining some revenge as well as some open range for his cattle he and his men have brought up for market from Texas.

This is a tale with several twists and turns in it, surprisingly so, but it is the people involved that make the story so memorable. These are real people with real problems, and this being a western, only violence, sudden death and a fast and bloody shootout at the end can salvage any hope for them – the ones who survive, that is.

I suggested earlier that this movie would make a humdinger of a movie. I have not seen it yet, but I have it on order. The film that was made of this book is entitled Short Grass (Allied Artists, 1950), and the screenplay was written by none other than Mr. Blackburn himself. The names of the characters are the same, and the plot summary on IMDB suggests that very few changes were made. Rod Cameron stars as Llewellyn, Cathy Downs as Sharon Lynch, Johnny Mack Brown as Sheriff Ord Keown, with Morris Ankrum as Hal.
Fri 7 Sep 2012


For those of you always on the lookout for hard-boiled fiction to read, and you have no a priori objections to reading a western, here’s one you might want to hunt down. There are some solid “tough guy” aspects to this 50-year-old novel that may be worth your attention, largely due to the highly individualistic nature of its main protagonist, Holt Brandon, construction chief for the Mountain Telegraph Company. In this book, not only must he get the job done on time, but he has to fight for his life all the while he’s doing so.

There are two obstacles, the first being Mountain’s main competitor, Consolidated, and they do not hesitate in hiring local gunmen to make sure Holt’s crew do not make their deadline. Second, and not insignificantly, is Colonel Templeton, the owner of the Montana land they must cross, an elderly gentleman from the South who imagines that the War Between the States is still going on, and still fighting imaginary battles in his mind.

Holt Brandon plays his cards strictly by the book, and his loyalty to his boss, Sam Whitcomb is never in question. The world of financial matters is beyond him, but what he’s fully aware of is this: If they do not get the wires strung to Warlock from Salish on time, all is lost for Mountain Telegraph.

Here’s a quote that demonstrates that Fox knew exactly what he was writing about, from page 113:

String wire, and you lose yourself in the endless race, not knowing one day from another but realizing that each day is a leaf fallen from the calendar, each days brings the deadline nearer; and always the poles set between the suns seem not enough. The ground is stubborn and repels the pick and the shovel, a batch of insulators proves inferior and has to be returned to Salish, and three of your crew slip away to see the lights of town and buck the tiger and fill a painted woman’s shoe with silver.

Poles are late in arriving, and the crew sent to fetch them reports a brush with hidden marksmen who keep them busy with guns when they should have been using axes. The wire stringers stand idle that day. The long lightning is flung from camp to town, shouting always for more supplies, more men, and you hammer the key constantly and wish that Sam Whitcomb were up and about and doing the job at the other end.

To add some variety to the plot, Holt is not shy around women, but he is caught by surprise when he finds himself the focus of attention of two of them: Gail, the daughter of his boss, and Ellen Templeton, the colonel’s daughter. It is clear which of them he will end up with, if either is to be the case, but that he will lose both of them is a definite possibility, and what Fox does is make sure the reader does not lose sight of that.

So — here’s a western that’s a trifle clumsy when it comes to affairs of the heart, perhaps, but not— ever — when it comes to matters of loyalty and pride, and other qualities that men have, or they’re supposed to.

— Reprinted from Durn Tootin’ #5.

July 2004 (slightly revised).
I've made no attempt to obtain an exact count of the western novels written by Norman Fox (1910-1960), but if he'd been able to live longer, I'm sure he'd have written a lot more than the roughly 30 or so I've quickly come up with.

He was a pulpster as well, with nearly a full page of entries already listed for him in the online FictionMags index, a list still under construction. The first of these, by the way, is “The Strange Quest” (Cowboy Stories, June 1934).

The photo of him comes from the back cover of one the hardcovers I own by him. What’s unusual about it is that it was taken by fellow western and adventure writer, Dan Cushman. I’d love to know more about when, where and why.

[UPDATE] 09-07-12.

**PULP AUTHOR CHARLES W. TYLER, by Victor A. Berch**

Charles W. Tyler was perhaps the most prolific pulp writer you never heard of. He was the author of 100s of novelettes and short stories, in all genres, many of which are listed below. He wrote detective stories, adventure stories, railroad stories and westerns, but except to a small handful of enthusiasts, his name is no longer known today.

He is the author of two titles included in *Crime Fiction IV*, by Allen J. Hubin:

- Blue Jean Billy (Chelsea, 1926, hc)
- Quality Bill’s Girl (Chelsea, 1925, hc)

The second of these is described as being “three novelets presented as a novel.” Since Tyler wrote six “Blue Jean Billy” stories that appeared in *Detective Story Magazine* (see below), a strong conjecture would be that *Quality Bill’s Girl* contains the first three, and *Blue Jean Billy* contains the final three.

Tyler’s two most prominent series characters in the detective pulps were Big-Nose Charley and Blue Jean Billy Race. Here are descriptions of both, as excerpted from the online website *The Pulp Heroes*, by Jess Nevins. (Follow the link for more.)

**Big-Nose Charley** was created by Charles W. Tyler […] appeared in a number of stories, starting with “Big-Nose Charley’s Get Away,” in the 5 April 1917 issue of *Detective Story Magazine*. […] Charley is a thief who, though occasionally relying on the more artistic forms of crime such as mail fraud, customarily uses strong-arm tactics to get his swag. […] [W]hat kept Big-Nose Charley going for so many years, and what makes his stories remembered fondly today, is the humor within them. The Big-Nose Charley stories are humorous, and meant to be, poking fun of themselves as well as at the genre.

and

**Blue Jean Billy Race**, the “highway woman of the sea,” was the creation of Charles W. Tyler, a fireman, magazine writer, and draftsman. […] Billy appeared in *Detective Story Magazine* beginning in “Raggedy Ann” on March 26, 1918 […] [Her father] raised Billy to hate society and its hypocrites and hypocrisies […] Billy is a thief and a pirate, stealing aboard ships to rob the owners and passengers at gunpoint and then slipping over the side and disappearing into the night. She’s not just a thief, though; she’s a thief taking revenge on the evil rich, those liars and cheats who rob from and swindle the poor.

Tyler’s entry in *the Crime, Mystery & Gangster Fiction Magazine Index*, 1915-2010, compiled by Phil Stephenson-Payne, William G. Contento & Stephen T. Miller (2010), mentions only that he flourished from 1917-1935.

He is also found in the online FictionMags Index, where no dates are given for birth and death, but it is noted that he was born in North Hinsdale, MA and that he should not be confused with Charles Waller Tyler nor Charles Willis Tyler.

In Allen J. Hubin’s massive bibliography *Crime Fiction Bibliography*, 1700-2000, it is stated he was born in Massachusetts, was a fireman, magazine writer and draftsman.

Armed with these bits of information, I set out to see what I could unearth through my subscription to the databases held by the New England Historic Genealogical Society to determine what information it might have on a Charles W. Tyler, born in Massachusetts prior to 1915 and born in Hinsdale (or North Hinsdale) Massachusetts.

It was only a matter of seconds to learn that no Charles W. Tyler showed up in the Society’s
databases.

What was my next step to be?

Having a world-wide subscription to Ancestry.com’s databases, I knew that that was to be my next avenue of research to see what that might produce.

There were loads of Charles W. Tylers, but one that caught my attention was a Charles W. Tyler who lived in Quincy, MA and was described as a novelist in the city directories for 1918 and 1920.

Poking his name into the US Census records from 1900 on up, I was taken by surprise at the entry of a Charles W. Tyler, born 1887 in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Could it be that there were two Hinsdales? One in Massachusetts and one in New Hampshire and somehow the compilers of the Fictionmags Index and Allen J Hubin’s CFIV had mistakenly assigned the birthplace of Charles W. Tyler to Massachusetts.

To verify this supposition, I turned to Wikipedia and sure enough, it verified that there was a Hinsdale, Massachusetts and a Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

Hinsdale, Massachusetts is in Berkshire County, Massachusetts and is part of the Pittsfield, Massachusetts, statistical area. While Hinsdale, New Hampshire is in Cheshire County, New Hampshire, south of Brattleboro VT near the Pisgah State Park at the border of New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

So, once again I turned to my Ancestry subscription. From previous searches on Ancestry, I knew that someone born in the 1880s had to register for the draft of World War I and I began to explore what might be in that particular database. I entered the name Charles W. Tyler and birthplace New Hampshire and up came Charles Warren Tyler, born 1887 in Hinsdale, New Hampshire and living in Quincy, Massachusetts.

The clinching piece of data was that he described himself as a writer for the Frank Munsey Company in New York. However, his birth date was given as September 1, 1888. Why Mr. Tyler chose to make himself a year younger is anyone’s guess. But it was not an unusual practice, especially with women and oft times men in the public’s eye.

Now, one of the great features of the Ancestry database is that it will suggest other of its databases to examine that relate to this person.

So, in the 1900 US Census, it showed Charles W. Tyler, age 12, born 1887, living in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, living with his mother, Clara, a widow.

In the 1910 Census, Charles W. Tyler, age 22, is shown living at No. 18 George St., Boston, MA as a boarder. His occupation, an artist with a general practice. (This seems to concur with Hubin’s description of him being a draftsman.)

For some reason, he does not show up in the 1920 Census. But in the 1930 Census, Charles W. Tyler, age 42, born in New Hampshire, is living in Glendale, California with his wife, Alice. His occupation is listed as a fiction writer.

And finally, the California Death Index shows that Charles Warren Tyler was born September 1, 1887 in New Hampshire and died April 3, 1952 in Los Angeles County, of which Glendale was a part. His mother’s maiden name was listed as Smith.

In the book A History of the Doggett/Daggett Family, it states that his mother, Clara Smith, was born in Boston Jan. 17, 1850 and had married Olcott B. Tyler of Hinsdale, NH. Their offspring was Charles Warren Tyler.

As an added bit of information, his story “Raggedy Ann,” which had appeared as a short story in Detective Story Magazine, March 26, 1918 was the basis for the silent film The Exquisite Thief, scenario by Harvey Gates and directed by Todd Browning, 6 reels and copyrighted April 4, 1919.

**Short fiction [crime and detective stories only]**

TYLER, CHARLES W. BNC = Big-Nose Charley; BJB = Blue Jean Billy.

* At Milepost 92, (na) Detective Story Magazine Apr 13 1920
* Big-Nose Charley and Any Old Port [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Nov 18 1919
* Big-Nose Charley and Deuces Low [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 6 1920
* Big-Nose Charley and His Jenny [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 17 1926
* Big-Nose Charley and Human Clay [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Sep 2 1919
* Big-Nose Charley and Madeyline [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Aug 15 1925
* Big-Nose Charley and the Double Cross [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Aug 17 1920
* Big-Nose Charley and the Merry Widow [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jun 11 1927
* Big-Nose Charley and the Promised Land [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Feb 24 1920
* Big-Nose Charley and the Simple Life [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 2 1917
* Big-Nose Charley and the Tout [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 14 1922
* Big-Nose Charley at Home [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Dec 16 1919
* Big-Nose Charley at the Auto Show [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jun 4 1921
* Big-Nose Charley at the Opera [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Feb 13 1926
* Big-Nose Charley at the Policemen's Ball [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 16 1921
* Big-Nose Charley at the Races [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine Nov 21 1931
* Big-Nose Charley Enters the City of Angels [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 8 1924
* Big-Nose Charley Finds a Brother [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Sep 5 1925
* Big-Nose Charley Gets an Interview [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Dec 10 1921
* Big-Nose Charley Gets His Match [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Feb 24 1923
* Big-Nose Charley Hops Off [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 28 1925
* Big-Nose Charley in New Orleans [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jul 20 1929
* Big-Nose Charley in the City of Culture [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 22 1921
* Big-Nose Charley in the Magic City [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jun 9 1928
* Big-Nose Charley Leaves His Card [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 24 1925
* Big-Nose Charley Lends a Hand [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine Mar 25 1935
* Big-Nose Charley Meets Some Home Folks [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jun 21 1924
* Big-Nose Charley on the Barbary Coast [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 1 1922
* Big-Nose Charley on the Mt. Division [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Dec 25 1917
* Big-Nose Charley on the Painted Plain [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 25 1924
* Big-Nose Charley Rolls His Own [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 25 1919
* Big-Nose Charley Sits in the World [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine May 5 1923
* Big-Nose Charley Works Alone [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Sep 11 1917
* Big-Nose Charley, Alias Santa Claus [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Dec 20 1924
* Big-Nose Charley, Bad Man [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 29 1918
* Big-Nose Charley, Gentlemun [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine Apr 18 1931

* Big-Nose Charley, Goober Grabber [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 7 1928
* Big-Nose Charley, Hijacker [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 11 1924
* Big-Nose Charley, On the Cross [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 16 1918
* Big-Nose Charley’s Color Blind [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine Aug 15 1931
* Big-Nose Charley’s Derby Hat [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Jul 10 1934
* Big-Nose Charley’s Dog Helps Out [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Aug 27 1921
* Big-Nose Charley’s Florida Front [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 24 1928
* Big-Nose Charley’s Get-Away [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 5 1917
* Big-Nose Charley’s Ha-Ha [BNC], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 10 1931
* Big-Nose Charley’s Safe [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine Feb 13 1932
* Big-Nose Charley’s Trick Umbrella [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Jul 25 1935
* Blue Jean Billy and the Lone Survivor [BJB], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Aug 22 1925
* Blue Jean Billy at Fiddler’s Reach [BJB], (nv) Detective Story Magazine Jun 25 1921
* Blue Jean Billy Plays Fair [BJB], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 18 1930
* Blue Jean Billy, Sky Pirate [BJB], (nv) Detective Story Magazine Apr 4 1925; Best Detective Magazine Mar 1937
* Blue Jean Billy, Wail of the Sea [BJB], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Nov 6 1926
* Cold-Hands Kate, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 15 1919
* Dim Trails [Railroad Detective], (na) Detective Story Magazine Feb 19 1921
* The Dub at Eagle Bridge, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 12 1920
* Echo Bowl, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Nov 6 1917
* Expensive Cigarettes, (nv) Detective Story Magazine Oct 26 1920
* Fair Pickin’s, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Nov 3 1928
* Fate Snaps the Shutter, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jul 15 1922
  Best Detective Magazine Feb 1931
* The Foothill Tiger, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 31 1925
* The Green Mask, (nv) Detective Story Magazine Jun 19 1926
* The Haunt of Raggedy Arm, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 7 1919
* The Haunted House on Dungeon Road, (na) Detective Story Magazine Jul 6 1920
* Highway Woman of the Sea [BJB], (na) Detective Story Magazine Aug 19 1922

* Hounded by Habit, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jul 30 1921
  Best Detective Magazine Oct 1933
* In Hungry Man’s Canon, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Sep 17 1918
* It Was Signed “Bill”, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jun 8 1920
  Best Detective Magazine Apr 1933
* Jimmy the Quilt, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 30 1921
  Best Detective Magazine Aug 1934
* Judy’s Touch, (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Oct 17 1931
* A Kiss for Big-Nose Charley [BNC], (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Oct 25 1934
* Landlubbers, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 8 1922
* Lon Durgin’s Honor System, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 19 1920
* Look Out!, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 7 1928
* Loose Ends, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 9 1918
* The Loot of the Overland, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 20 1917
* The Lying Signal, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 30 1927
* Mountain Misery, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Aug 16 1924
* A Muddy Bird, (nv) Detective Story Magazine Sep 20 1924
* Nix’s Mate [BJB], (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 11 1919
* On the Right Side of the Wrong Street, (ss) Detective Story Magazine May 14 1921
* The Pal in the Pullman, (nv) Detective Story Magazine Nov 29 1924
* Pat Brady — Flatfoot, (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine May 10 1933
* Phantoms of Wolf River, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Oct 29 1918
* Raggedy Ann, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 26 1918
* Raiders from Raggedy Ann, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jul 16 1918
* Raw Silk, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Dec 2 1919
* Sea Law and Blue Jean Billy [BJB], (nv) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Nov 14 1931
* Second No. 12, (na) Detective Story Magazine Aug 31 1920
* 77 and a Wink, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Feb 26 1921; Best Detective Magazine Jul 1934
* Shattered Evidence [Railroad Detective], (ss) Detective Story Magazine May 27 1919
* Sidetracked Loot on the Mountain Division, (na) Detective Story Magazine Aug 20 1921

* The Slicker Bandit, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 23 1926
* Stormy Petrel, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Jan 10 1925
* There Were No Clews, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Mar 23 1920; Best Detective Magazine Aug 1932
* The Third Thirteen, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 27 1920
* Too Soft, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Feb 18 1928
* Tramps—Hoboes—Bums, (ss) Detective Story Magazine Apr 25 1925
* The Wrong Sucker, (ss) Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Sep 10 1934

ss = short story; nv = novelette; na = novella.

**Short fiction [everything else; likely incomplete]**

TYLER, CHARLES W. Born in North Hinsdale, Massachusetts; not to be confused with Charles Waller Tyler (1841-1920) or with Charles Willis Tyler (1857-1922)

* The Angel of Canyon Pass, (ss) Railroad Stories Apr 1936; Railroad Magazine Feb 1973

* At Five Paces, (ss) Western Story Magazine Apr 29 1922; Far West Stories Aug 1930
* Back on the Main, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Dec 1931; Railroad Magazine Oct 1964
* Bad Men of Old Hat, (ss) Western Story Magazine Jun 21 1924
* Baldy Sours [Baldy Sours], (ss) Quick Trigger Stories of the West Apr 1930
* Baldy Sours and a Cock-Eyed Cupid [Baldy Sours], (ss) West Jan 8 1930
* Baldy Sours and Burning Brands [Baldy Sours], (ss) West Oct 1 1930
* Baldy Sours and Skates Ajar [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Oct 10 1937
* Baldy Sours and the Charlot Race [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Oct #1 1927
* Baldy Sours and the Day of Judgment [Baldy Sours], (ss) West Nov 13 1929
* Baldy Sours and the Firing Squad [Baldy Sours], (ss) Western Trails Jan 1930
* Baldy Sours and the Fountain of Youth [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jul #1 1928
* Baldy Sours and the Golden Fleece [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jan #1 1927
* Baldy Sours and the Gunight Boom [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Jan 10 1929

* Baldy Sours and the Human Race [Baldy Sours], (ss) Adventure Mar 1937
* Baldy Sours and the Mexican War [Baldy Sours], (ss) Western Trails Sep-Oct 1929
* Baldy Sours and the Pig Skin Game [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Apr 25 1929
* Baldy Sours and the Polo Game [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Jun 25 1935
* Baldy Sours and the Spark of Life [Baldy Sours], (ss) Western Aces Nov 1937
* Baldy Sours and the Tin Horse [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Dec 25 1934
* Baldy Sours and the Woolly West [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Apr 25 1937
* Baldy Sours at a Gold Strike [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Sep #1 1927
* Baldy Sours Takes the Count [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Mar #2 1928; Thrilling Western Magazine Spr 1970
* Baldy Sours, Arabian Knight [Baldy Sours], (ss) Short Stories Nov 25 1928
* Baldy Sours, Bad Man from the West [Baldy Sours], (ss) Quick Trigger Stories of the West Aug/Sep 1930
* Baldy Sours, Badman [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Dec #1 1927
* Baldy Sours, Errant Knight [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jun #2 1927
* Baldy Sours, King [Baldy Sours], (ss) Western Adventures May 1931
* Baldy Sours, Promoter [Baldy Sours], (ss) Western Adventures Nov 1931
* Baldy Sours, Rain Maker [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine May #2 1927
* Baldy Sours, The Late Lamented [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Oct #2 1928
* Battle-Call for Johnny Bates, (nv) Star Western Oct 1939
* The Bird That Knew, (ss) Western Story Magazine Feb 3 1923
* The Blue-Dome Mustang, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jun #2 1923
* The Bo Who Rode No. Two, (ss) Short Stories Sep 25 1929
* The Boothill Parson of Babylon Bend, (nv) Star Western Jan 1944
* Boothill's Buryin' Man, (ss) New Western Magazine Dec 1950
* Brand Pirates of the Big Muddy, (nv) Star Western Oct 1941
* The Brand-Blotters Want War!, (nv) Star Western Aug 1942
* Buzzards at Bay, (nv) Far West Illustrated Oct 1927
* C-Bar, Grab Your Guns!, (ss) Star Western Jun 1947
* Calico's "Booty" Contest, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Aug #2 1925
* Cassidy's Kid, (ss) Short Stories Oct 25 1937
* Clear Iron, (ss) Railroad Stories Feb 1934
* Clear the Iron, (ss) Short Stories Aug 10 1936; Short Stories Apr 1952
* Code of the Morse Man, (ss) Short Stories Nov 10 1947
* The Cop on the Beat, (ss) Short Stories May 10 1934

* The Coronation of Baldy Sours [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Aug #2 1926
* The Courtship of Baldy Sours [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Sep 18 1926
* Cow-Pirates of the Smoky Trail, (ss) Star Western Sep 1939
* Cowboy Sleuths [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Aug #1 1927
* Cowboys Amuck, (ss) Ace-High Magazine May #1 1926
* Cowboys at Stove Pipe, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Mar #2 1926
* Crazy Well [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Mar #1 1927
* Crossed Wires at Poverty Bend, (ss) Western Story Magazine Mar 19 1921
* Cut Two Notches, (ss) All Western Magazine Nov 1936
* Dead Man’s Bend, (ss) Short Stories May 10 1936
* Dead Man’s Key, (nv) Short Stories Jul 10 1929

* Derelict Cowman’s Last Stand, (nv) Ace-High Magazine Feb 1938
* The Devil Deals Three Tough Jokers, (ss) Star Western Jul 1947
* Devil Makes a Cowman, (ss) [??] 1939; Fifteen Western Tales Sep 1952
* Diamond Jack of Wyoming, (nv) Western Story Magazine Mar 11 1922
* Double-Breasted Mike, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Dec 7 1918
* Down Sunset Trail, (ss) People’s Magazine Feb 1917
* Down the Smoky Road, (ss) Short Stories Aug 25 1935
* Fast Bullet Man, (na) Fifteen Western Tales Feb 1949
* The Fastest Gun, (nv) Far West Illustrated Apr 1927
* Feud Herd Coming Through!, (nv) Ace-High Magazine Jul 1938

* Fighting Men of the Union Pacific, (nv) Star Western Mar 1942
* A Firing Fool, (ss) Short Stories Jul 25 1933
* For the Little Lady, (ss) People’s Magazine May 1917
* Fresh in the West, (ss) Far West Illustrated Nov 1928
* From the Primer of Hate, (ss) Far West Illustrated Magazine Sep 1926
* God of the High Iron, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Mar 1930
* Gun Lord of Poverty Empire, (nv) Star Western Oct 1940
* Gun Rider for the Overland, (ss) 10 Story Western Magazine Nov 1942
* The Gun River Pilgrims, (nv) Star Western Apr 1940
* Gunmen of the Rails, (na) Short Stories Sep 10 1929
* Gunmen of the Rails, (ss) Short Stories Sep 10 1929
* Gunmen’s Trails, (nv) West Mar 2 1932
* Guns of the Graveyard Trick, (na) Short Stories Jul 10 1935
* Gunsmoke Funeral at Yellow Cat, (nv) Star Western Jul 1940
* Hard As Nails, (ss) People’s Favorite Magazine Aug 10 1917
* He Forgot to Pay, (ss) Western Story Magazine Nov 5 1921
* He Knew It All, (ss) Western Story Magazine Jul 18 1925
* Hell in Their War-Sacks! [Dewlap, Wattles and the Hairpin Kid], (nv) Star Western Jul 1945
* Highballing the Moonbeam Trail, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine May 1930
* Hiram at a Rodeo [Hiram Pertwee], (ss) Western Story Magazine Oct 8 1921
* Hiram in a Hold-Up, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Apr 1916
* Hiram in No Man’s Land, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Nov 9 1918
* Hiram on a Down-Hill Road, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Feb 1915
* Hiram on the High Seas, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Nov 1918
* Hiram on the Yellowstone Trail [Hiram Pertwee], (ss) Western Story Magazine Dec 31 1921
* Hiram Rides “Parson Pickax”, (ss) Western Story Magazine Mar 5 1921
* Hiram Ropes a Kitty Cat [Hiram Pertwee], (ss) Western Story Magazine May 7 1921
* The Horned Toad Detour, (ss) Railroad Man's Magazine Nov 1930
* Hot Shot (with Griff Crawford, E. S. Dellinger, James W. Earp, William Edward Hayes, John Patrick Johns, Gilbert A. Lathrop, A. Leslie, John A. Thompson & Don Waters), (ss) Railroad Stories Apr 1934
* Igo, the Killer, (ss) Western Story Magazine Sep 24 1921; Far West Stories Mar 1930; Western Winners May 1935
* The Iron Warpath, (nv) Short Stories Oct 10 1943
* Johnny Bates Adopts a War!, (ss) Star Western Dec 1939
* Johnny Bates' Running-Iron Rebellion, (nv) Star Western Dec 1944
* Johnny Gosh, Top Rope, (ss) Western Story Magazine Sep 10 1921
* The K.K.K., (sl) National Magazine Jul 1906
* The Kid from Gunhammer Vreek, (na) Dime Western Magazine Jul 1946
* Killer Country, (nv) Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine Oct 15 1932
* The Killer of Canyon Diabolo, (nv) Ace-High Magazine Apr #2 1923
* The Last Witness, (nv) Short Stories Feb 25 1937; Short Stories Aug 1951
* Little Joe, (ss) Short Stories Jan 25 1938
* The Male of the Species, (ss) Breezy Stories Sep 1916
* A Message from Mescal, (ss) Western Aces Jan 1938
* Mohave Buckaroo, (nv) Short Stories Mar 10 1939
* A Mountain Division Man, (ss) New Story Magazine Jul 1914
* The Murder Syndicate, (nv) Argosy All-Story Weekly May 12 1923
* Night Operator, (ss) Railroad Magazine Jan 1971
* Night Trick, (ss) Railroad Magazine Jan 1953
* No Cattle Sold in Hell, (nv) Ace-High Magazine Jun 1938
* No Law on the Tonto Rim, (na) 10 Story Western Magazine Dec 1941
* Old “Harqua Hala” Bill, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Sep #2 1923
* On First 303, (ss) The Railroad and Current Mechanics Oct 1913
* On Time!, (ss) Railroad Man's Magazine Mar 1931
* The Ora Hanna Stampede, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jan #1 1926
* Out Where the Worst Begins, (ss) Ace-High Magazine May #1 1928

* Outlaw Frontier, (na) Short Stories Jun 10 1932
* Outlaws of Milestone Mesa, (na) Western Story Magazine Apr 30 1921
* Over the Big Divide, (ss) Western Story Magazine Jun 3 1922
* Owlnoot Roundup at the Horned Moon, (nv) 10 Story Western Magazine Dec 1940
* The Parson Buries His Dead, (ss)
* The Parson of Owlnoot Junction, (nv) Star Western Nov 1943
* Parson Pickax in the Pictures, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Mar #2 1924
* Peppers in Peril, (na) Western Story Magazine Jan 21 1928
* Petticoat Doolittle's Emancipation, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Jun 1 1926
* Pirates' Trail, (na) Western Story Magazine Mar 9 1929
* Pistooleers West of the Pecos, (ss) Dime Western Magazine Jul 1950
* Ragtown Shall Rise Again!, (nv) Star Western Oct 1945
* Railroad Drummer, (na) Railroad Stories Dec 1934

* Railroad Engineer, (ss) Railroad Stories Oct 1933
* Railroad Romeo, (ss) Short Stories Mar 25 1937
* Rails West, (ss) Short Stories Sep 10 1944
* Range of Missing Men, (na) Dime Western Magazine Feb 1951
* Ranger Wanted—in Hell, (nv) Star Western Mar 1944
* The Rattler Racket, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Aug 1931
* The Reign of Baldy Sours [Baldy Sours], (ss) Ace-High Magazine Feb #1 1927
* Reply to Johnson’s letter, (ms) Big-Book Western Magazine Jun 1949
* Ribbons of Iron, (ss) Top-Notch Oct 15 1921
* The Road to Yesterday, (ss) Railroad Stories Feb 1936
* The Rustlers’ Union Votes for War!, (nv) Star Western Mar 1941
* Shoddy Mike’s Last Stand, (ss) Western Story Magazine May 14 1921
* Shoot ‘Em Quick—Plant ‘Em Fast!, (nv) Star Western Nov 1947
* The Shuffle Trick, (ss) All-Story Weekly May 22 1920
* The Sky Hoss, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Mar #1 1926
* Smiling Smith Sits In, (ss) Railroad Man’s Magazine Aug 1930
* Smoke Blue Ranch, (na) Western Story Magazine Aug 27 1921
* Smoky Smith—Sheriff, (nv) West Apr 15 1931
* Star and Six-Gun, (nv) West Dec 10, Dec 24 1930, Jan 7 1931
* The Star on Outlaw Trail, (ss) All Western Magazine Jan 1937
* Strange Guns Invade the Rim Rock, (ss) Star Western Oct 1937
* “Sunset” Jones, (nv) Western Story Magazine Feb 10 1923
* Telegraph Joe, (ss) Western Story Magazine Jul 16 1921
* The Tenderfoot of Buzzard Flat, (nv) Western Story Magazine Oct 7 1920
* The Terrible Trail to Dodge, (nv) Zane Grey’s Western Magazine Jun 1953
* Texas Sends ‘Em Tough!, (na) Big-Book Western Magazine Mar 1949
* There’s Hell in Johnson Country, (na) 10 Story Western Magazine Apr 1942
* They’re Shipping Hell from Texas!, (nv) Star Western Jan 1947
* Those Grave-Digging Brand-Hawks!, (nv) Star Western Jul 1943
* Those Three Texas Hellions, (nv) Star Western Jun 1943
* Three from Texas, (nv) Dime Western Magazine Jan 1952
* The 3-Cross Button Rides Gun, (ss) Ace-High Magazine Nov 1938
* “To Hell with the Rangers!”, (nv) Star Western Jan 1943
* Too Many Guns, (na) Western Story Magazine Jul 21 1923
* Track Clear at Algodones, (ss) Argosy Sep 1945
* Track Clear!, (ss) Argosy Nov 1943
* Trouble at Cottonwood Station, (ss) Argosy Jan 1944
* Trouble in the Canyon, (ss) Railroad Magazine Oct 1952
* Trouble Rides from Texas!, (ss) 10 Story Western Magazine Dec 1949
* Two-Gun Justice (with W. D. Liberty), (nv) Lariat Story Magazine Sep 1926; Cowboy Story Magazine Apr 1927
* The Walking Fool, (ss) Western Story Magazine Apr 2 1922
* War Call of the Singing Wire, (na) Ace-High Western Stories Jan 1942
* Welcome to Bullfrog, (ss) Western Story Magazine Mar 28 1925
* The Western Union Kid, (ss) Railroad Stories May 1934
* When Hoboes Rode, (ss) Railroad Stories Jun 1935
* When Rangers Ride the Death-Watch, (nv) Star Western Jun 1944
* When the Chips Were Down, (ss) Railroad Magazine Jul 1945; also as “When the Chips Are Down,” Railroad Magazine Dec 1968
* When the Lights Are Green, (ss) Short Stories Aug 25 1936
* Wolves of the Iron Trail, (ss) West Sep 2, Sep 16, Sep 30 1931

SOURCES:


The FictionMags Index

The Pulp Heroes, by Jess Nevins.

With a special note of gratitude to Phil Stephensen-Payne for not only generously allowing such extensive usage of the bibliographic material above, but also for letting us use his wonderful Galactic Central website as a source for the cover images you see here. Thanks, Phill

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I collect and read quite a few other types of magazines besides the pulps. A couple of members of FictionMags, an online Yahoo discussion group, asked me about my favorite magazines, so I thought I’d take this opportunity to discuss the subject.

Slicks —

This is easy for me to answer. My favorite slick magazine without a doubt is *The Saturday Evening Post*. They used the best authors and the best artists. It was weekly and some issues in the 1920's were 200 pages.

Usually collectors of the *Post* concentrate on certain authors or artists. Since thousands of issues were published you do not find many people trying to collect the entire run. However, I was one of the completists and at one point I had over 3,000 issues during the 1900-1970 period.

The last time I moved not only could I not pick up the yearly boxes of the magazine (each box had 52 issues), but the movers had trouble also because of the weight. Eventually I sold much of the collection but I still have a complete run of 1940-1970.

Another slick I liked a lot was *American Magazine*, mainly because of the mystery short novels they published. Jon Breen edited a collection of these novellas called *American Murders*.

Digests —

This is a far more difficult category for me to choose a favorite but I'll go with *Galaxy* for the SF genre and *Manhunt* for the crime genre.

*Galaxy* was the first magazine I bought off the newsstand in 1956 and it led to my present collection of many different titles. But my reason for picking *Galaxy* is not just nostalgic. I really feel that it was the best of the SF digests especially under the editorship of H.L. Gold and Fred Pohl.

Pohl was smart enough to offer Robert Silverberg a deal to buy all of his stories submitted to *Galaxy* in the 1965-1972 period or thereabouts. Some of the best SF ever written appeared during this period and I've read many of Silverberg's stories and serials more than once.

Has there ever been a greater or higher quality number of novels in any SF magazine? I mean, think of it: *The World Inside*, *Tower of Glass*, *Downward to Earth*, *Dying Inside*, all in about two years.

Alfred Bester wrote two great novels but they were in 1952 and 1956. J.G. Ballard wrote some great novels but they all did not appear in the SF magazines. Maybe Philip K. Dick comes closest but again, he did not write all of them for the SF magazines. Sturgeon had some great work in *Galaxy* but it was all novelette length.

Can anyone show me a comparable run of novels in the SF magazines?

*Manhunt* lasted 114 issues during 1953-1967 and during the fifties started the hardboiled crime digest craze. At one time there seemed to be dozens of *Manhunt* imitators but none of them could match the quality of the magazine that started it all.

Unfortunately by the sixties it was all downhill and the hardboiled crime era was just about over. Two crime digest still exist, though they are not really hardboiled like *Manhunt*, *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*.

Circulations are dropping fast and in these days of the e-book revolution, we will probably see the end of the digest magazines.

Literary Magazines —
By literary I mean such magazines as the *Hudson Review*, T. S. Eliot’s *Criterion*, *Scrutiny*, *Kenyon Review*, and so on.

I have just about all the back issues of many of the quarterlies and I love the *Hudson Review*, but my favorite is *Horizon*, not the hardbound art magazine but the monthly British magazine edited by Cyril Connolly during 1940-1949. It lasted 120 issues and I like it so much that I have two sets, one of loose issues and one bound set.

There are other magazines that I have in two sets, loose and bound and you know you have to love a magazine to have it in bound and loose sets! Let’s face it, collecting books and magazines can be an addiction like alcohol, smoking, gambling, and drugs. But at least we get something to read and sometimes the books are even worth money. Not to mention that collecting old magazines won’t harm your health.

**Men’s Adventure Magazines**

This is a sore point with me and maybe some of you can help me out. I have hundreds of issues from the 1950’s and 1960’s, most showing sensationalistic covers like Nazis partying with half-nude girls, while GI’s wait to gun them down. I have yet to find a title that ran decent fiction other than maybe *Cavalier* in the fifties.

I’m not talking about *Playboy* which actually ran high quality fiction, but the titles like *Men’s Adventure*, *True Men* and so on. The only redeeming value to these magazines are the crazy covers but I’m hoping someone here can convince me otherwise.


Please someone show me something else about these magazine that is readable! I’ve just about given up. The covers are stunning and very eye catching but that’s all I see about these magazines. I guess the WW II vets loved these things but I can’t see anything other than the covers worth collecting.

Check out the link to [menspulpmags.com](http://menspulpmags.com). It’s a real laugh.

At one time I had a great cover painting from one of the men’s adventure magazines. It show Nazis turning girls into gold ingots. No wonder they lost the war.

**PULP MAGAZINES:**

I haven’t even touched the pulps which are such a big subject they deserve their own section separated by genre:

**General Fiction Pulps** —

These pulps are often called adventure pulps by collectors but I prefer the label General Fiction. The best ones lasted for very long periods and were very popular with male readers. *All Story*, *Argosy*, *Short Stories*, *Blue Book*, *Adventure*, and *Popular Magazine* were the main titles and I’ve collected them all:

*Adventure Magazine* is my favorite and the pulp years lasted from 1910-1953, for 753 issues. The best period was during the 1920’s when editor Arthur Sullivant Hoffman managed to obtain the very best action and adventure fiction. Richard Bleiler wrote the standard history of the magazine in his *Adventure Index*. Also *Blood n Thunder Magazine* devoted a special issue to *Adventure* a couple issues ago. I had an article picking my favorite stories.

*All Story* lasted for over 400 issues, 1905-1920, when it was absorbed by *Argosy*. Famous for providing Edgar Rice Burroughs with a market for his Tarzan and Mars novels. Sam Moskowitz wrote an interesting history of the magazine in *Under the Moons of Mars*.

*Argosy* became the first pulp in 1896 and lasted into the 1940’s when it became a man’s adventure magazine.
Short Stories began in 1890 and lasted into the 1960’s. For much of that period it came out every two weeks like clockwork and printed the best action adventure. Blood n Thunder had a long two part article covering the 1920’s and 1930’s.

Blue Book was known for quality fiction and Mike Ashley wrote a long history of the magazine which appears in Pulp Vault 14. This is the best single issue of a pulp fanzine and can be ordered on Amazon.

Popular Magazine lasted over 600 issues, 1903-1931 and was called the training ground for the Saturday Evening Post. Another high quality pulp that had a two part article in Blood n Thunder.

Detective and Mystery Pulps —

This is easy because of what collectors call “The Big Three”: Black Mask, Dime Detective, and Detective Fiction Weekly. Hammett started in Black Mask and Chandler wrote for all three.

Western Pulps —

Western Story lasted over 1200 issues and is my favorite. But West during the Doubleday years of 1926-1935 was also quite good. So was Star Western and Dime Western, both published by Popular Publications.

Hero Pulps —

Most were aimed at the teenage boy market but at least two stand out: The Spider because of the crazy, fast moving plots and weird menace elements and Secret Agent X because it was not as childish as the others.

I have to admit that I have a problem with many of the hero pulps because of the silly and sometimes stupid sidekicks. I know they were there because someone figured the teenage boys would like them. Sort of like the childish sidekick humor in the B-westerns of the 1940’s.

Some of the pulp sidekicks make the western sidekicks look brilliant. In Doc Savage we have Monk and Ham, for instance and their dialog and attempts at humor are enough to make me stop reading. Same thing with G-8 and His Battle Aces. Nippy and Bull have made me consider ripping up a $100 G-8 pulp.

SF and Supernatural Pulps —

Astounding definitely was the best SF pulp. Weird Tales and Unknown Worlds, the best supernatural. Strange Tales, if it had lasted longer than seven issues, it would have been as good or better than the other two.

Famous Fantastic Mysteries and the companion magazine, Fantastic Novels, are beautiful pulps. It is still possible to get a set without breaking the bank, and these magazines are another example of sets that I have in two formats: bound and unbound. I admit it’s crazy to have two sets, but who said love is logical?

Sport Pulps —

Street and Smith’s Sport Story was by far the best sport pulp.

Love Pulps —

These were the best sellers of the pulps because teenage girls and young women bought them. Love Story was the best with a circulation that reached 500,000 a week. Edited by the great Daisy Bacon.

I’d appreciate any feedback on the above that you would care to provide. Do you disagree or have other favorites?

ADDED LATER:

Todd Mason mentioned that the Daisy Bacon years where she edited Detective Story are underrated. This is certainly true especially the digest period in the 1940’s.
In 1943 Street & Smith changed the format of their entire pulp line of magazines from the standard pulp size of 7×10 inches to the smaller digest size. The paper shortages during WW II probably drove this decision. Then the publishers saw that the future looked bleak for pulps and killed every digest title except for *Astounding*.

But to get back to Daisy Bacon, she was the guiding force behind *Love Story* for two decades and then she took over *Detective Story* and actually introduced a more hardboiled story to the sedate magazine.

*Detective Story* had started in 1915 and for most of the next 25 years steered clear of the hardboiled type of story. But Daisy managed to get some of the *Black Mask* writers to write for her, for instance Roger Torrey and William Campbell Gault. Fred Brown also. I cover the history and many of the authors of *Detective Story* in an article which can be seen here on the *Mystery*File blog.

When I say *Love Story* was the best of the love pulps, I'm speaking compared to each other. Since I try to collect every fiction magazine under the sun, I made an attempt, more than once, to read *Love Story* and some of the competition.

I would not advise anyone to try this experiment. Despite being the best sellers among all the pulps, the love genre was very restrictive to say the least. The young ladies and teenage girls of the 20's, 30's, and 40's, only wanted to read the same formula over and over, and the love pulps gave it to them, over and over.

I'm speaking of the girl meets boy, they have some problems, and everything is resolved at the end. *Ranch Romances* was different from the others, but I see it as mainly a western title with some romance elements.

The love genre may have been the big sellers among pulps (and even slicks since the readership was mostly women), but nowadays collectors mainly ignore them and copies can be had very cheaply. I can count very few people who collect them.

When I bid on some copies at a recent pulp convention, several of my collector friends burst out laughing or were just stunned speechless. I could only explain my seemingly insane actions as an attempt to collect something new, since I've collected everything else.

Previously in this series: The FRANK M. ROBINSON Collection Auction

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**Archived Review: WILLIAM COLT MacDONALD – Bad Man’s Return.**

**Posted by Steve under Pulp Fiction, Reviews, Western Fiction**

3 Comments


Over the years there have been a lot of mystery writers named MacDonald (or Macdonald, McDonald, or even Mcdonald), and some of them were quite well-known, and still are. But if you’re a mystery fan only, William Colt MacDonald may be one you don’t recognize. If I were to tell you that he wrote a lot of westerns, though, maybe you’d place the name.

He was the creator of “The Three Mesquiteers,” among others, intrepid cowpoke adventurers in a long line of B-western movies, and this is one of the novels they were in as well.

Some of MacDonald’s western are listed in Hubin, although not this one. Most of the ones that are listed feature a western detective named Gregory Quist, but I have a feeling that more of them could easily be acceptable.

The connection between between western fiction and detective stories is a solid one. My own feeling is that as many as 95% of all western stories contain crime, mystery or detective elements of one form or another. They come in various guises, and sometimes you have to look sharply, but if you look carefully, I think you’ll find that most westerns are nothing more (or less) than yesterday’s detective stories.
And what's more, not only should Al Hubin know about this one, but Bob Adey should, too. That's right, this is a locked-room mystery, and it's not in Adey's book either.

To tell you the truth, I haven't really read as many westerns as I have mystery stories, so I can't say that this is generally so, but it's my impression that westerns have their own code of telling, their own sense of formal structure.

Where I think the story is leading up to as the climax can often not be the case at all. Westerns seem to spread out plotwise in a good many directions, even more than spy or adventure thrillers do, and usually head off completely opposite from the one I think they ought to be taking.

Sometimes it's uncomfortable, but most of the time I give in and let the author lead me where I will.

In this case, for example, I'd have thought the capture of the killer who frames Barry Hesman for the killing of Tucson Smith would be what the final chapter would be all about. But no, somehow that's a matter that's settled long before then. By that time the story has gone on to other things, most notably the saving of Anne Callister's ranch for her. It seemed anti-climactic to me, but I guess it wasn't for me to say.

As for the locked room, it takes our heroes the full novel before they work it out, but no long-time reader of detective stories will be at all surprised by what [WARNING: Quickie Plot Alert] a piece of rawhide and some bear grease will do.


[UPDATE] 01-15-12. The last "Three Mesquiteers" movie appeared in 1943, and it's easy to find a complete list of them online (here, for example). But I do not have a list of the books they appeared in, I'm sorry to say; the last one I have a record of is The Galloping Ghost, which was published in 1952.

I also do not know what to make of my review above, where I say that Tucson Smith, one of the three original members of the group, was killed, and it was his murder that had to be solved. More than that, at this time it is a mystery to me.

[UPDATE] 01-18-12. Thanks to David Smith, who reminded me that a list of Three Mesquiteer novels appeared in the WesternPulps group on Yahoo last June, and to Phil Stephensen-Payne for pointing out that two of the trio's tales were serialized in the pulp magazines, as you'll see below. (Taken from the online FictionMags Index.)

Restless Guns (with only Tucson and Stony) (1929)

Law Of The Forty-Fives (1933) aka Sunrise Guns

Powdersmoke Range (1934)

Riders of the Whistling Skull (1934)

The Singing Scorpion (1934) aka Ambush at Scorpion Valley

Ghost-Town Gold (1935) aka The Town That God Forgot

Bullets for Buckaroos (1936) aka Bullet Trail

The Three Mesquiteers (1944)

Bad Man's Return (1947)

Powdersmoke Justice (1949)

Mesquiteer Mavericks (1950)

The Galloping Ghost (1955)

The Three Mesquiteers (serial) Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine Jun 29 1935, etc.

Cactus Cavaliers (serial) Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine Oct 26 1935, etc. [Name of hardcover edition, if any, unknown.]

[UPDATE] 01-20-12. Thanks to "Alan in London" for providing the titles of four more appearances of the Mesquiteers, including the one from 1929 which featured only two of them. Besides adding them to the list above, I've changed the dates for a few others, based on the data I found in Twentieth Century Western Writers When I get the chance, I'll do some
Pulp Writer VICTOR MAXWELL, Part 2

by Terry Sanford

The first part of this article on pulp writer Victor Maxwell appeared earlier here on this blog. As Monte Herridge pointed out in the comments that followed, there was a quasi-autobiography of Maxwell in the January 5, 1929, issue of Detective Fiction Weekly. Monte, by the way, is indeed a DFW scholar. Now to be honest, I’ve never put a lot of stock in DFW’s authors’ writing about themselves because some were obviously pure fiction.

Now what Max did was a blend. He had his Halloran character meet Victor Maxwell. Probably made perfect sense to him since both names were fiction. Halloran is telling young Willis of his encounter the next day. The germane part is very brief and the underlined words are my way of highlighting new information.

“Well he says as how he began what he calls his ‘nefarious career,’ whatever that is, in New Yawk on the Sun, an’ went from there to the New Yawk City News Association, an’ then to Brooklyn an’ other bad luck burgs Includin’ Wilmington, Delaware and Boston, which went Democratic – yuh know the place — an’ then how his feet got to itchin’ and he come out West, infestin’ for some twenty years all the live burgs an’ them as was foredestined to become live burgs.

“Most of the time, he says, he was a newspaperman, but once or twice he deteriorated into bein’ an editor, an’ once he was an advance man for a show. One time, he says, he ran for sheriff an’ got as far as gettin’ the Democratic nomination; an another time he says he was a special agent for the Governor of Oregon, doin’ high-class gumshoe work after Wobblies an’ such.

“An it was then, he says, that he run across Don Thompson, who writes for DFW an’ he thought Thompson was a right smart guy. From what he says I got a hunch, too, that he done some Intelligence work durin’ the war; but yuh can’t tell about those guys.”

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B. Detective Magazines. DFW indicates variously Flynn’s, Flynn’s Weekly, Detective Fiction Weekly.

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* Three Out On Christmas. DFW, Dec 12, 1925.
* Mister Somebody Else. DFW, Jan 9, 1926.
* The Ghost Burglar. DFW, Feb 13, 1926.
* A Jeweler’s Reputation. DFW, Feb 27, 1926.
* Two In The Dark.  DFW, Mar 27, 1926.
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* Suspicion Of Murder.  DFW, Jan 25, 1930.
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* Hit-And-Run.  DFW, Apr 19, 1930.
* Brass Buttons.  DFW, Aug 2, 1930.
* The Invisible Death.  DFW, Sept 6, 1930.
* Two Confess Murder.  DFW, Sept 20, 1930.
* The Hazardous Path.  DFW, Oct 18, 1930.
* Fast Time On The Main Line.  DFW, Nov 1, 1930.
* A Fine Night For Murders.  DFW, Feb 28, 1930.
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* Way Up In The Air.  DFW, Nov 11, 1933.
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* The Old Lummox.  DFW, Dec 30, 1933.
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Mon 18 Jul 2011

Archived Review: DAVID BURNHAM – Last Act in Bermuda.

Posted by Steve under Reviews

DAVID BURNHAM – Last Act in Bermuda. Charles Scribner’s Son, hardcover, 1940.

Even though there is a hint in the last paragraph that Inspector Steve Hamilton of the Bermuda Police Department may have had another case to solve, it didn’t happen. This is it, the only case he ever had — the only one recorded for posterity, that is — but nonetheless, it’s a good one. Better than good, as a matter of fact.

A thought occurred to me while reading this book, though, and I’m not exactly sure why it’s never occurred to me so strongly before, since I’ve known it all along, but this is what it was. That the settings of the mysteries that are part of the period that’s commonly known as the Golden Age of Detection — and 1940 is almost exactly in the center of the time frame, or just afterwards — that the setting and people involved were almost always of the upper crust, the jet set (before there were jets) the rich or the artsy or both.

The private eyes hung out in the gutters of society. The socialites had their world, and a certain segment of the reading population liked their detective fiction to take place in that world, not that they were part of that world, but that they enjoyed the opportunity to take a peek into that world and (perhaps) to see segments of that society broken down, just a little.

As you must have gathered by now, that’s the kind of mystery this one is. And since the youngish Inspector Hamilton’s kid sister Joan is romantically involved with the owner of the estate on the island just off Bermuda, he’s also there johnny-on-the-spot before the crime of murder is committed.

What this book is also about — and once again this is something that’s also very common in books taking place in the Golden Age of Detection — is a murder that takes place in a somehow isolated locale, in this case an island, and therefore resulting in only a limited number of suspects to be suspicious about. (Well, almost.)

The list includes the following: an young actor and a young actress; a man-about-town and his wife; a famous director’s wife; and a famous artist, female. Not to mention the host and one mystery guest, whom everyone seems to know and seems to have seen on the island before the surprise is ever announced.

Besides being involved with the host, Tony Bound —not to Inspector Hamilton’s pleasure — his sister Joan is also his “Watson,” as she amusingly discovers that a murder investigation is something very much to her liking: eavesdropping in on the questioning of the suspects, making timetables, and all of the other accouterments and other apparatus of solving a crime.

Either you like timetables in your detective fiction, or you don’t, but I do, even though I also like a private eye novel taking place in the lower echelons of society as much as anyone else. The detective work in this book I thought was excellent.

Worthy of a Queen? Yes, even so, and even with the cliched situations and settings that make themselves so noticeable that you cannot help but stumble over them, all I can say it that is it a
shame that Joan never had the chance to help her big brother out like this again.

PostScript: This was the only work of crime fiction that David Burnham (1907-1974) produced, but Bill Pronzini, who provided the scan of the dust jacket above, suggests that perhaps he was also the author of *Winter in the Sun* (Scribner's, 1937), a book about ranch life in the Arizona desert. The name's the same, and the publisher's the same, so the chances are better than good that it's a match.

— February 2006

[UPDATE] 07-19-11. The following was sent to me by Victor Berch. I've decided to include it here with the review itself, rather than in the comments section:

Comment on Last Act in Bermuda, 1940.

Steve:

Bill Pronzini is certainly correct in his assumption that David Burnham, the author of *Last Act in Bermuda* (1940) was the author of the book *Winter in the Sun* (1937).

David Burnham was born March 2, 1907 in Chicago, IL, the son of an English immigrant, Claude G(eorge), a railroad traffic manager, and Mary (Gillis) Burnham, a native of Minnesota.

David was a graduate of Princeton University, where he was involved with its choral group: the Triangle Club. He and other members of the group wrote the words to a vocal score titled “Napoleon Passes.”

According to Al Hubin’s *Crime Fiction Bibliography*, he died in 1974. For some reason or another, I could not locate his name in the SSDI. Perhaps he had opted out of the program, which was perfectly legal way back then.

He is not to be confused with the David Burnham who was an investigative reporter for the *New York Times*.

Here is a list of his book publications:

1) This Our Exile. (New York: C. Scribners, 1931. London: P. Davies, 1931)
4) Last Act in Bermuda. (New York: C. Scribners, 1940)

He also has one entry in the Fictionmags Index for a short story titled “Turn the Page,” which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* Sept. 17, 1938

Victor

John Creasey MBE (17 September 1908 – 9 June 1973) was an English crime writer, also writing romance and western novels, who wrote more than six hundred novels using twenty-eight different pseudonyms. He created several characters who are now famous, such as The Toff (The Honourable Richard Rollison), Commander George Gideon of Scotland Yard, Inspector Roger West, The Baron (John Mannering), Doctor Emmanuelle Cellini and Doctor Stanislaus Alexander Palfrey. The most popular of these was Gideon of John Creasey. Standing alone in the bleak Yorkshire Moors is Sir Rufus Marne's 'House of the Bears'. Dr. Palfrey is asked to journey there to examine an invalid - who he finds has disappeared. John Mannering (aka 'The Baron') makes his first appearance in this volume. Lord Fauntley cannot help showing off both his daughter and the security under which his precious jewels are kept. Mannering finds himself attracted to both. Money is tight and so he plans a burglary, but this fails and unexpected consequences result. One of the many further twists in this award winning novel occurs when the police appear to seek Mannering's help, only to have everything turned upside down as the plot develops . . . Read online. 18. If you happen to have any John Creasey book and would like to add to the free online collection which I'm hoping to bring together, you can do the following: Scan the book in greyscale. Save as djvu — use the free DJVU SOLO software to compress the images. Rollison sipped the drink appreciatively, while Kemp swallowed half of his in a gulp, then spoke in a more composed voice. “I'm sorry I let forth like that but I'm worried stiff and I was told you were the only man likely to help me.” “Exactly what is the trouble?” asked the Toff.