

Origins of Genre Fiction: Pulp

1896	<i>Argosy</i> (Munsey): first fiction pulp
1915	Street & Smith reboots <i>Nick Carter Weekly</i> as <i>Detective Story</i>
1919	<i>Western Story</i> (Street & Smith)
	<i>True Story</i> (Physical Culture, ed. Bernarr Macfadden) (“true”)
1921	<i>Love Story</i> (Street & Smith)
1922	<i>I Confess</i> (Dell)
1923	<i>Weird Tales</i> (Rural)
1924	<i>Ranch Romances</i> (Clayton)
1926	<i>Amazing Stories</i> (Experimenter, ed. Hugo Gernsback)
1929	<i>Amazing</i> bankrupt, sold
	Gernsback launches <i>Science Wonder Stories</i>
1930	<i>Astounding Stories</i> (Clayton; later Street & Smith)

If there is one trait that the pulpwood reader has it is his predilection for sameness. If he subscribes to a smooth-paper sheet he may find one story on the theme he prefers; the pulpwood magazine, on the other hand, offers him nothing else. If he purchases a Western pulp he does so because he wants to read only fast-ridin', quick-trigger cowboy yarns—and half a million of him do so every week. The love-fiction magazine supplies the romantic thrills that the girl wants, to the exclusion of everything else, and more than a million of her traipse to the newsstand every seven days to buy their favorites. Detective, Sea, Sport, Adventure, Aviation, Pseudo-science—each has its own devotees.

You [the aspirant pulp writer] are writing for the masses, not the classes, so use simple words and phrases. Avoid long, tedious paragraphs. Be careful about punctuation.

Harold Brainerd Hersey, *Pulpwood Editor: The Fabulous World of the Thriller Magazines Revealed by a Veteran Editor and Publisher* (New York: Stokes, 1937), 2, 285.



“Sidewalk Newsstand, United States, Storefront, c. mid-1930s,” Pulp Magazines Project, pulp-mags.org.