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# The Classic Era Of American Comics



## Synopsis

In terms of both words and images the world had never seen the like of the American comicbook. They were bizarre, morbid, lurid, risqué and bursting with subconscious desires of burgeoning youth culture. By the time 1954 arrived there were 500 different comics being published by 35 different companies, selling over 60 million copies a month between them. This is the history of the era and the art it produced. The book looks at the pioneers of the comicbook and the comic's founding links with sleazy pulp magazines; the campaign for censorship; the fraught relationship between the comicbook artists and their publishers; how what they did was rarely recognised as art at the time - and of course the comics themselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Whether he is discussing how one company's failure became another's success, reviewing how the House UnAmerican Activities Committee destroyed EC Comics, or revealing the underlying bondage themes of early Wonder Woman adventures, Wright is well informed. And he tackles such central themes as funny animals, clowns, superheroes, girls (both good and bad), horror, crime, war, and romance. He does all this adequately. But he does not rise above the adequate, rivet the reader, or seem to offer information that has not been heard before. The layout often veers into the garish, which doesn't help. This book is recommended for public libraries that have an extensive collection of comics-related material. Other libraries would do better with *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* (LJ 11/198). DChris Ryan, New Milford, NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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Nicky Wright collected comics all his life and wrote for American Comic magazine. He was principally known as an award-winning writer and photographer of books on American cars. He lived for most of the last 15 years of his life in Michigan, but died in 2000 in England, home of his birth. Joe Kubert started working in the comics business at age 11 and for the next 60 years produced stories about Hawkman, Tarzan, and Batman, as well as many other great comics. He was an editor for DC Comics for 25 years and founded the only school for comic artists. He received many honors including the 1998 Will Eisner Hall of Fame award. He died in August 2012. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Nothing very special about it, kind-a bland... Book was used and in good condition as described... Worth what I paid for it(.84 cents)!Cheers

Actually, I would like to give this 4.5 stars. The Classic Era of American Comics begins where comic books almost ended. With Fredrick Wertham, "Seduction of the Innocent and the congressional hearings that followed the publication of that book. When writer address the history of a specific character in Comics they briefly go over the history of comics. Mr. Wright and Mr. Kubert take their time and give a much fuller history of the events that created comic books. Also included are many colorful old pictures of comic strips, and later, comic books. Dividing the book into sections, they not only cover the very beginning of comics that we know, but comics that have been forgotten. Also included are sections of Animal comics, Jungle comics with "good girl Art" and many other forms that have come and gone. All with splendid pictures. But the most important aspect of this book was context. Often glossed over, Mr. Wright emphasizes the role Fredrick Wertham had in ending an era of comics. In his book, "Seduction of the Innocent" published in 1955, Mr. Wertham contended that comic books were evil. He claimed Superman was a Nazi. He also claimed that Batman and Robin were gay and just reading about them caused children to become gay. Most important, he claimed that reading comics caused Juvenile Delinquency. A major target, of course, was the EC horror comics. In this very balanced book, Mr. Wright and Mr. Kubert show some of the artwork that should have been aimed for an adult audience. Soon, congressional hearings were held and congress forced the industry to censor itself. The censorship was so heavy it almost destroyed the industry. Rather than just going after ghouls and goblins, or giving a rating system that would put adult comics out of the reach of children, the new Comic Code went after ideas such as civil rights, anti

war sentiments and the evils of drug use. It took 15 years before an anti drug theme could return to comics. It certainly ended an era. I had two, small disappointments with the book. Often the author would refer to specific covers or events but not reprint them. Basil Wolverton's Mad covers and Mac Raboy's Captain Marvel Jr. covers are two examples. Also, much of the artwork did not give creative credit to the artists who drew them and sometimes the year was left out. These should be considered minor points. If you do like this book I suggest that you also read Jim Steranko's The History of Comics Volume I and II.

This book is written by a comic book fan. It covers 1930-50s. The best part of the book are the many larger reproductions of comic book covers and art. I would have appreciated reading more scholarly information about an art form that encompasses world history, economics, and culture. I'd recommend, instead, this other book, which has in-depth historical and biographical information, and is written with style and grace: Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art by Roger Sabin

Not much for history. The Classic Era of American Comics practically omits the earliest days of comics and starts at the end of the Golden Age and at the beginning of the Silver Age. The author does explain how comics began if only briefly. Pictures from the Golden Age are shown that nicely segue into the Silver Age but this is the book's flaw. After the intro on how comics started, we are treated to only a few pages of late 1930's and early to mid 1940's comic book art but then the rest of the book is about the wild and campy 1950's with a slight mention of the 1960's. Much of the text discusses Fredrick Wertham, the German PhD, who found the medium so disreputable that he had to make a name for himself and attempt to ruin the comic book. Because of this, congressional hearings were held and congress forced the industry to censor itself by instituting the ill-fated and ever hated COMICS CODE AUTHORITY. All in all, the pictures are nice. You get a very general history of comics and a huge helping of Silver Age nostalgia. If you want a book that properly balances each era of comics and shows you a real history, check out: Over 50 Years of American Comic

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