

Introduction

The digest-sized paperbacks are very much the forgotten step-children of the American paperback revolution. The earliest series predate the advent of Pocket Books by two years. They were published in parallel with the smaller mass-market paperbacks, flourishing even amid the paper rationing of World War II. They were distributed almost exclusively through newsstands, very few being sold through standard bookstores. Like the magazines whose pipelines they shared, most were issued in numerical sequence, one at a time. The more reliably scheduled series, like the Mercury and Hillman lines, were probably flushed from display when a new volume appeared. The more irregular series, especially during the war, probably stayed on display until they eventually sold out. The print runs were probably competitive with the mass-market imprints, 75,000 to 100,000 copies at a time; the big difference was that publishers like Pocket Books went back to press again and again while digests rarely saw a second printing.

The biggest liability that the digests had was that too many of them were abridged, making them a poor bargain compared to the unabridged books being published by Pocket Books, *et al.*, for the same price. Most of the digest series fell by the wayside during the paperback glut of the early 1950s. Of the few that still hung on, only the Mercury Press imprints survived the collapse of the American News Company in 1957, and those changed into magazines shortly thereafter. Five years later the Mercury Mystery imprint was revived to publish one last book, thus bracketing this index by issuing both the first and last books listed herein.

The overwhelming majority of the digest series were each devoted to a single genre of fiction. While a few series featured a mix of genres, only a couple, such as Reader's Choice Library and some Avon series, featured "mainstream" fiction. The largest genre published was detective fiction (almost 1100 books); western fiction was much less prevalent (circa 325 books), and science fiction was marginally on the radar. Almost as common as the mysteries was a long-defunct genre called "love novels," with about 925 books. This designation seems to have been an invention of the lending library publishers and was carried over to most of the digest reprints. Love novels were a form of romance that, unlike the squeaky-clean nurse novels that characterized the traditional romance, featured women who had sex without benefit of marriage and carried on in other unconventional ways. I have long suspected that "love novels" were intended as romances for men. This label withered away in the late 1950s and many of the novels that were issued under that label as digests were reprinted by mass-market imprints in the 1960s as contemporary or "modern" novels.

Among collectors the digests have long been recognized as, collectively, the hardest to find of the so-called "vintage paperbacks." They also have the poorest documentation, being omitted completely from Robert Reginald's *Cumulative Paperback Index*. The various paperback price guides have included them, but due to the books' extreme rarity, none of those listings were complete and the complex histories of some of the imprints had not been disentangled.

It was because of this vacuum of detailed information on the digests that I began to compile my own database. It began more almost 40 years ago as a personal project, with no thought of publication. At first I computerized the data on a small group of publishers. Over the years I expanded the scope of my files until I had at least some data on all the digest-sized paperbacks. My sources were originally the books themselves, such as I owned, and the ads therein. I filled out the lists with data collected from ads in fanzines and mail-order catalogs as well as the various price guides that appeared over the years. My research really took off when I got regular access to the Internet. After mining data from the World Catalog and various dealers' listings on Abebooks and similar sites, I became more serious about researching the antecedents of the paperback editions. I made a point of looking up every digest title in the *National Union Catalog*. If I didn't find a hardcover listed there, I consulted the *Cumulative Book Index*, which had the added benefit of being searchable by title. If I couldn't find a title in either book, I started looking for an original that it might have been retitled from. I made a determined effort to verify data on the paperbacks from as many sources as possible, particularly after noticing what appear to be "check entries" in one of the price guides.

I made a concerted effort to examine the *Catalog of Copyright Entries* for all "original" publications. Some publishers, particularly Avon, made a point of copyrighting their reprints, usually referencing the cover art. I have augmented the entries in the publisher list by giving the full publication date reported in the *CCE*. Some years' volumes are poorly organized and difficult to use but the recent posting of digitized versions on the Web has made the information more accessible.

An additional research tool that is not well-known is *The American News Trade Journal*, an organ of the largest American magazine distributor. It was usually published monthly, except during World War II, when it rarely appeared at all. This magazine had regular features that highlighted new magazines and book imprints, and contained profiles of many publishers, as well as tidbits of trade gossip. I was fortunate to get access to a

largely complete set on microfilm and mined it quite heavily for info on the digest publishers that were distributed by ANC.

While compiling data for my Defunct Paperbacks indexes I discovered that *Publishers' Weekly* used to run thrice-yearly lists of forthcoming books, with scheduled publication dates, from information provided by the publishers. The list covering January through May was called "Spring Book Index" and was printed in the last January issue. The list covering May through September was called "Summer Book Index" and appeared in the last April issue. The list covering September through January was called "Fall Book Index" and appeared in the last August issue. (For the sake of clarity, I have referred to these listings as "forecasts" in any discussions of their use.) Very few of the digest publishers lasted long enough to have availed themselves of this promotional resource; of those that did, Mercury Publications seems to have sent the most information in, although some other publishers did so sporadically. That info can be spotty, but I have used what I found to augment the publication dates for their imprints.

Unfortunately, after all the research described above this is still very much a Work in Progress. It sometimes seems that the more I learn, the less I know. I was persuaded to post this index online, to make the information that I have collected available to all, and with the hope that other collectors may be inspired to help fill in the gaps. It was originally posted in January 2008, and the Contents Index was added six months later, followed by various Addenda whenever significant new information was discovered. It was completely revised in the summer of 2010 and was revised yet again in the fall of 2013. This posting in 2022 will probably be the last full revision. Any subsequent data will probably be posted as "Addenda."

It should be emphasized that this version of The Digest Index is not meant to approximate the polished presentation that would be expected in a printed work. The sometimes complex formats described below are an attempt to "show my work" so that the user can tell exactly how reliable my information is and where the gaps are that need to be filled.

The data are sorted into four sections.

1) Index by Publisher

This section groups the books by imprint. In some cases where a sequence had different imprints, and the variances are few, all the volumes are listed together and the minor imprints are cross-referenced. If a sequence had two substantial blocks under different imprints, the imprints are detailed separately and cross-referenced.

If books have no imprint, then the publishing company itself is referenced, in abbreviated form, in brackets; e.g., [Hanro]. All such books are grouped under "No Imprint" at the beginning of the Publisher Index. I have appended, at the head of each entry, scans of that imprint's various "logos." For some of the series with no imprint I have occasionally included a scan of the publisher's "slug" instead.

Under each publisher/imprint the following information is given:

Publishers:	All publishing companies that issued the imprint, with all publication addresses, as given in the books.
Distributors:	Usually identified from the distributor's marks on the covers.
Format:	All books are understood to be digest-sized and square-bound unless otherwise noted. Such notes may cover an entire imprint or isolated volumes.
Prices:	The cover prices during the run, in US currency only.
Comments:	Annotations regarding related imprints or publishing companies, including what little is known (to me) about the publishers. May contain conclusions based on examination of the books themselves, as well as deductions based on other research. Also notes such oddities as the compiler feels may be of interest. There are also comments about how many of an imprint's covers appear on the Bookscans website. This information should be accurate as of February 2022.

I have attempted to document the point at which features like addresses or prices change, but it will be obvious to the reader that I have not succeeded in all instances. Any place where a range of book numbers in the headnotes has endpoints in parentheses indicates a research gap that needs to be filled.

I suspect that the publishers stated for several of the more obscure imprints are not the actual publishers. In order to circumvent the paper rationing during World War II, a would-be publisher had to locate an existing publisher that wasn't using its full paper quota and use it as a "front." The constantly changing publishers that are listed in the Erie Series and the early Bonded Books probably reflect the companies whose paper quotas had been latched onto for each book. In some such instances the actual publisher may never be known.

Distributors' marks were not common on books or magazines until after World War II. Such identifications may be a useful research tool for demonstrating links between imprints or documenting changes in distribution strategies, so I have noted all the ones I've seen. The following abbreviations have been noted and identified:



American News Company



Fawcett



Independent Distributors Association



Independent News Company



Kable News Company



Leader News



Publishers Distributing Corp.



Select Magazines

American News was the dominant magazine distributor in the US during this period. Besides delivering magazines to newsstands nationwide, ANC also distributed hardcover books, including lending-library imprints, and sold subscriptions for mail-only magazines. They had warehouses in most major cities and also owned a chain of large newsstands in those same cities. Publishers who did not use ANC would be forced to find a way to deal with the hundreds of local distributors that operated as an alternative distribution system. One could either negotiate with all of them individually or use one of the smaller national distributors like IND as a middleman. Of the publishers covered by this index, it is believed that Hillman and Universal acted as their own distributors. It is my understanding that both Independent News and Leader News were owned by Harry Donenfeld or his associates and that two distributors were used to keep his comic book line (DC) separate from his other, less respectable, publications. It is also my understanding that "ID" did not indicate a specific distributor but the logo (an outline of North America emblazoned with "ID") could be applied to books or magazines as a way of saying "Not American News." This would explain why it is often seen in conjunction with other distributors' marks.

The American News Company went out of business in 1957, taking many magazine and book publishers with it. As the independent distributors scrambled to grab the major titles that ANC had serviced, many of the smaller publishers got squeezed out of the distribution pipeline and died off.

The book listings for each imprint are in numerical order and give the author(s), title, cover artist and publication date for each book, this last in the most detail known to the compiler. An unnumbered book may have a parenthetical number if one appeared in the publisher's ads, or if it fills an obvious hole in the run; otherwise, the designation "un" appears. Unless there is some notation to the contrary the user should assume that any list of unnumbered books is in random order.

Artist credits may be plentiful for some imprints but sparse for others. In all cases, the artists' names are displayed in **red type** to enhance readability and reduce the effect of overcrowded lines. Most artist credits came directly from the books themselves, either from a printed credit or by reading a signature. A credit in parentheses means the specific artwork is identified on some other appearance but not on the book being cited. A credit in brackets comes from a secondary source, such as a bibliography accompanying an artist profile; those derived from the *Catalog of Copyright Entries* are noted with the © symbol. The name given for each art citation is the longest version given on that specific book, to the best of my knowledge.

Such pieces of the date that do not appear in the book itself are given in various kinds of brackets. More specific dating can often be found in forecasts in prior volumes, or in a related series or magazine, as well as in printing histories given in later printings. These are considered primary sources, and such augmentations are given in parentheses, like this:

(1953)
(June 1953)
(June) 1953
(6/12 1953)
(6/12) 1953

Information in square brackets comes from secondary sources, such as the *Catalog of Copyright Entries*, the *New York Times*' "Books Published Today" feature, and printing histories in other publishers' reprints. A considerable effort has been made to create coordinated timelines for most of the more prolific publishers, and some bracketed dates are based on the identification of a contemporary book whose dating is known.

Examples:

[June 1953]
[6/12 1953]
[6/12] 1953

Curly brackets indicate that I have made an educated guess that may be subject to correction by further research, as so: {1953}

For instances where I have not seen the book and cannot get an accurate determination from secondary sources, but I am fairly sure that the book itself gives a date, the date field appears as: []. All books that are undated and remain undatable have the abbreviation "n.d." in the date space. I have left the date field blank only in cases where I have no clue whether an unseen book is likely to be dated or not and cannot make an educated guess.

Although it is tempting to use the information at hand to fill out the list of, say, the Mercury Mysteries with estimated months of publication for all the volumes, I have decided to let the existing information stand on its own, and let users make their own extrapolations.

An additional resource exists that can be useful as a research tool but cannot be used as a definitive source for exact dating. One occasionally encounters copies of books with dates rubber-stamped on them somewhere. We cannot be sure exactly who stamped it, but it was most likely done by a distributor or newsstand as a form of inventory control. The digests in particular were treated like magazines by both newsdealers and distributors. Since they had no obvious "cover dates" and, in some cases, no dates at all, a newsdealer might stamp one when it arrived so that he would know how long it had been on display and when it was appropriate to ship it back. (I have seen at least one book whose stamped date, when compared its known publication date, suggested that it had been stamped with an "off-sale" date.) I have mentioned in the headnotes such date stamps as I have seen; they can give at least an approximate idea of when a specific book or an otherwise undated series was issued.

For most of the digest publishers there is no evidence that any of their publications had more than one printing. During WWII, books and magazines tended to sit on newsstands until all the copies sold out, often for months. There was little opportunity for smaller publishers to reprint a title, no matter how popular. With the end of paper rationing after the war, the newsstands were flooded with new magazines and book series, lowering overall sales and making it difficult to sell out any given printing. Most of the later publishers, like Venus Books or Croydon Books, changed the book number when reprinting a title. Thus every printing was a separate edition and the printings are already documented by listing all the book numbers.

There are two or three documented instances, mentioned in the headnotes, where multiple printings have been identified. Several others have been suggested by the printing histories in later Pocket Books and Bantam

Books editions, but none of these has been documented as yet. Whether these represent the tip of an iceberg is still uncertain. The most obvious way to identify a later printing is to examine any ads at the back of the book. The list of prior volumes should not have numbers significantly higher than the individual book's own number. I have examined the ads in all the volumes available to me and found only one book where the ads suggested that it might be a later printing.

2) Index by Author:

The books in this section are sorted by author (last name first), then by title. Anonymous volumes, mostly anthologies, are listed at the beginning of the Author Index.

I tend to follow the usual conventions in parsing an author's name, though I have added a couple of features of my own devising. An author's name is given in the fullest version known to me, with the parts that actually appear in the bylines in boldface. Parts of the name that may vary from book to book are given in parentheses. Parts of the name that are known but never appear in the bylines are given in square brackets. If one of the given names used in the byline is a nickname, the formal name is given in angle brackets. The years of birth (and death if applicable) are given along with an indication of the author's nationality. The latter is not a standard annotation and has been difficult to document for the more obscure authors. An additional annotation may appear in brackets if the language in which the books were written does not match the author's nationality. Although most nationalities are given in adjectival form, the abbreviations US and UK are used to indicate residents of the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively, even though the terms abbreviated are not adjectives.

I have indicated, where known to me, the birth names of any female writers who wrote under their married names. I have also indicated the obverse by annotating married names to some female writers who wrote under their birth names. This annotation appears in square brackets preceded by the term *mariée*. I compiled a lot more of this latter information than I've actually used, confining myself largely to names that appear in copyright notices, or are the names under which the author is found in standard reference works like *The National Union Catalog* or *Contemporary Authors*.

Examples:

Christie, Agatha [Mary] [Clarissa], [née Miller], [mariée Mallowan]
Williamson, Jack <John> [Stewart]

The personal data are drawn from a wide variety of sources and, in cases where sources disagree, every attempt has been made to ascertain which is correct. In a few cases where I have not been able to reconcile these differences I have, for now, left out the disputed data. Research in these areas is continuing. If an author is not known to be deceased, a one-space blank appears in the death date spot. If an author is known to be deceased but his death date is unknown, four blank spaces appear in that spot. Any author born before 1922 is assumed to be dead. If a birth year is not known but an obituary gives the author's age at death, that age is given parenthetically after the death date.

All reliable pseudonym identifications are included. In many cases the pseudonym identified is the only byline under which that author appears in this index, and there may not be any entry under the real name. If an author does appear under more than one byline, a full set of cross-references are given under the real name to all the pseudonyms used, even if the real name was not one of the bylines. In a small number of instances, authors well-known under their real names appear in this index only under obscure pseudonyms. In an attempt to be as informative as possible I have, in several such cases, inserted an entry under the real name with a cross-reference to the pseudonym.

All the editions of a given book are gathered together and listed sequentially in one spot; any additional titles used also appear in the author listing, but only as cross-references to the full listing. Generally the listing appears under whichever title or byline most closely matches the previous hardcover edition. Paperback originals are grouped under the first title and byline used. All other things being equal, I have generally tried to list a book's multiple editions chronologically but I have occasionally shuffled the order if it made a complex history easier to read.

The citation of imprint, book number and date (year only) appears on the right side of the page. In between the title and the citation is a parenthetical annotation which supplies the following information:

type of book
original title and/or byline,
original publisher and year of publication, and
state of the text.

In between the book title and the parenthetical annotation described above, there may be an additional annotation, in brackets and underlined. This is a series "flag". A list of series characters is given just below each author's name and before the list of books. Each of that author's characters' names is given in full, with a portion of each name underlined to match the "flags."

The series data for mysteries and science fiction should be comprehensive, if not exhaustive. The information for the westerns is undoubtedly less so, as there are fewer reference works for the western genre and many minor writers (and series) are not referenced anywhere. I have repeated, with his permission, most of the relevant series information from Allen J. Hubin's *Crime Fiction IV*; I have separately confirmed as much as I could from other sources to reduce the actual amount of "cribbing." I have identified a number of series not previously referenced; others likely remain. I have obsessively flagged every book with a given character, eschewing several instances where the note "all books contain..." could have sufficed. Although not standard for such series references, I have chosen to flag the only book with a given character if I was aware of additional stories with that character published elsewhere.

The vast majority of these digests were reprints of books previously published in hardcover. A number of books are known to have been previously published in Britain, without any prior US editions. These were often described as "original" publications, as most US publishers do not consider such books to be reprints. I have tracked down as many of the latter as I could, but such books were often retitled and are difficult to identify. In several instances a novel may have been reprinted directly from a magazine without an intervening hardcover. These were not always acknowledged and are admittedly easier to identify among the science fiction titles than any of the other genres.

For the prior publication data, I have usually cited either first US hardcover edition or the earliest prior US edition under the same title, with the same text or contents. If there was no prior US edition I have cited the first edition in country of origin. This information is skimpier for older public domain reprints, particularly for foreign books where the exact translation reprinted may not be known. I cited in full prior magazine publications if the book was otherwise a First Edition.

Other forms of citation are as follows:

(? , 1946) - If prior publication is indicated but details are unknown

(original) - if a book is completely new

(original, from movie) - If book is adapted from a movie script, etc.

(from *Original Title*) or (with *Other Title*) - if a novel is excerpted from a larger volume

All books are understood to be novels unless otherwise indicated. The label "coll" (collection) indicates two or more separate stories by the same author(s). The label "anth" (anthology) indicates two or more separate stories with different authorship. The abbreviation "[coll]" is used a few times to indicate two or more previously published stories masquerading as a novel. "NF" indicates a non-fiction book.

I used a certain amount of abbreviation in citing the previous publishers. Well-known publishers like Random House and Phoenix Press, for example, are cited as Random and Phoenix respectively. More obscure publishers may be cited in full. Multi-named companies, such as Duell, Sloan & Pearce, are cited in full, as are all the versions of Doubleday that involved partners. On the other hand, publishers like William Godwin, Inc. are cited simply as Godwin. Non-US publishers are cited with a country (almost all are [UK]); any not so cited are American publishers.

A number of the books herein do not bear the same titles they did as hardcovers. Not all of them bother to mention it. I have supplied all original titles, where known. A title given in square brackets was not acknowledged, as far as I know, on the reprint. A few titles given in curly brackets are educated guesses on my part or reflect my ignorance as to whether the book itself acknowledges the original title.

Examples of these citations include:

acknowledged status:
 (Original Title)
 (Original Title by Original Byline)
 (Original Title [by Original Byline])

unacknowledged status:
 ([Original Title])
 ([Original Title by Original Byline])

status unverified:
 ({Original Title})

There are still about 10 books that are believed to be reprints but for which I have not been able to establish the original publication data, most of them British. See the notes under "Scans" later in this introduction.

A depressingly large number of these digests were abridged, usually to fit in a standard number of pages. These vary from minor trims here and there to massive deletions of pages at a time. While many of the volumes covered readily acknowledged their abridgment, many others were abridged without acknowledgment. The phrase "a full length novel" that appears on the cover of most Hillman digests is extremely misleading. I was able to compare about a dozen of these Hillman editions against other editions and in all but one instance they were conspicuously abridged. The early Mercury Books, when they were mostly mainstream novels, are silent on the subject; comparisons of several of those to other editions found cuts as long as 2 to 3 pages between one paragraph and the next. Apparently even the claim "a complete \$2 novel" that appears on some books is not reliable; similar text comparisons found cuts in books with that description as well.

When describing collections or anthologies, the notation of abridgment indicates only that the paperback has fewer items than the original and is not a comment on the completeness of the individual contents.

Examples of citations:

acknowledged status:
 abr abridged (includes books described as "edited")
 c/u complete and unabridged
 rev revised (includes books described as "adapted")

unacknowledged status:
 [abr]

Many books, particularly the 1950s love novels, assert that the texts have been "revised." I have not had an opportunity to compare any such reprints to the previous editions so I do not know whether this is really any different than "abridged." A number of the original novels issued by the Hanro group of publishers were later reissued with revised texts. I did comparisons of several of those and the changes were often minor. I suspect that this publisher's revisions, particularly on the reprints of old hardcovers, were solely for the purpose of getting a new copyright. Some of their original novels that were later revised had originally been published before they began registering their copyrights, so the same theory may apply.

3) Index by Title:

Books are listed in this section without any publication details. It is simply a cross-reference from Titles to Authors. Titles are listed in alphabetical order, with leading *A*, *An*, and *The* ignored. Titles that begin with a numeral are listed twice, once in a numerical group before "A" and again as if spelled out alphabetically. A second section lists alphabetically the original titles of books that appear in the index only under retitles.

4) Index by Artist

This section is a detailed listing of attributed cover art. An index of interior illustrations and cartoons is included as part of the Contents Index.

Artists are listed alphabetically, with the same name formatting as in the Author Index. Scans of each artist's signature, wherever available, accompany the names. Each piece of art is listed on a single line showing imprint, book number(s), book title and author. The space allocated for the book number is wide enough to accommodate multiple numbers if a cover was reprinted on subsequent editions of the same book. If the later

edition has a different title or byline, the information is dropped down to the next line and the book number and title are indented. In such cases, the last book number on the first line is followed by a comma to indicate that the entry is continued. If a cover is reused on a different book, the same format is followed but the book number on the first line lacks a comma.

Examples:

Cameo Book	323, 335, 369	<i>Wild Girl</i> by Lewis Dixon
Carnival Book	923,	<i>Sinners Club</i> by Harry Whittington
Star Novel	758	[same]
Venus Book	152, 165,	<i>Passion is a Woman</i> by Kate Nickerson
Venus Book	198	as: <i>Hollywood Starlet</i> by Richard Hall
Cameo Book	300	<i>No Man of her Own</i> by Florence Stonebraker
Cameo Book	360	<i>Hotel Waitress</i> by Tom Manning

Following the main artist entries are those works signed with only initials, where the full name is not yet known, as well as entries for several as yet un-interpreted signatures as well. An “Unidentified” section lists some unattributed covers if they have significant features, like a wraparound cover or multiple printings or are reprints from other sources, but these are not otherwise detailed.

In an ideal universe, this would be a complete listing, by artist, of every book cover in this index, as well as such interior illustrations as exist. Unfortunately, far too many of the books have no signatures or printed credits and I have found secondary sources to be unreliable in this matter. I have seen attributions for covers of books I own on which I can find no trace of a signature. It is possible that such annotations derive from artist profiles that have appeared in magazines not seen by me, but I would be reluctant to include such attributions without knowing the source. Additionally, although a large number of Avon's cover artists were identified in copyright registrations, I have seen at least a half dozen such books that were signed by a different artist, calling into question how reliable even those data are. This listing is far from complete; there are still a large number of covers I have not seen, mostly among the Hillman westerns.

A few publishers, such as the Hanro imprints, reused covers on later editions of the same book and sometimes swapped them around onto different books. I have documented these reprints as best I could, even when the artists are unidentified, but there are still several of the Hanro reissues I have not seen.

Contents Index

While the vast majority of the books covered in the Digest Index are novels, there are also a sizable number of collections and anthologies, many of whose contents have never been previously documented. The Contents Index is a sub-index with its own Author, Title and Artist listings for the stories and articles that appear in those anthologies and collections. It also has sections with detailed descriptions of each volume and its publishing history. A separate Introduction appears therein and contains its own format descriptions and additional acknowledgements.

Appendix

An Appendix is included, providing numerical checklists of certain imprints, deliberately excluded from the main Index for one reason or another, that are related in some way to imprints that are included. This listing is by publisher only and is not cross-referenced in any way.

Scans

In order to facilitate help from other collectors, I have included a section with various text scans. Most are scans of the first text pages of the reprints whose original titles are still unidentified. At this point, every such book has a text scan. I scanned in a few other pages to demonstrate the sources of my educated guesses about several more.

Pop-up comments

The user will find an occasional "pop-up" comment attached to an entry. These contain additional incidental information that didn't fit easily into the page formats but which I thought might be of interest. Their presence is indicated by a word balloon icon in the right margin; just place your cursor over the icon and the comment will be displayed.

Excluded imprints:

This iteration of The Digest Index contains every imprint or publisher that I am aware of that fits the criteria I set for inclusion. The following potential imprints are deliberately excluded for the reasons given.

ARCHER BOOKS

It took some time but I finally managed to examine a few of these. It appears to me that they are all variant editions of British books that were modified for distribution in the U.S. As such, I have deemed them to be outside the scope of the present work.

AVON LOVE BOOK MONTHLY

Although not seen by me, this imprint was included in the first posting of this Index, largely on the basis that both Hancer and Holroyd described the series as being digest size. However, collectors Bruce Brenner and Fred Meyerriecks have between them described all three volumes as being "bedsheet" size. That, and the fact that Avon copyrighted all three volumes as a periodical, has resulted in this imprint's deletion.

HANDI-BOOKS

Although these are noticeably larger than standard mass-market paperbacks of their day, I do not consider them large enough to qualify as digests. This imprint is now covered in my Defunct Paperbacks index.

MERCURY LIBRARY

The two volumes known are both listed in the World Catalog as special editions for the Armed Forces. On the assumption that this series was not produced for general distribution, I am not pursuing it.

PADELL BOOK & MAGAZINE CO.

What information I have been able to gather about this publisher suggests that their publications were short pamphlets rather than full-size books.

PRE-FERRED BOOKS

This publisher issued only two books, both by the same author, five years apart. It appears to be a vanity press and not a mass-market imprint.

REX STOUT MYSTERY

This was the earliest of Avon's magazine-like series. The Catalog of Copyright Entries records that the first six volumes were copyrighted as Periodicals and only the last three volumes were copyrighted as Books. It is clear that Avon had a change of heart about these series around the beginning of 1947 and issued all the later series/volumes as books. I have no problem including any of the other series as books but this series seems to me to be firmly in the magazine category and so I have excluded it.

WORLDS OF IF ANTHOLOGIES

These fall in the crack between being magazines and being books. I have decided to not include them, largely because it would open up a can of worms regarding many similar reprint series from the 1960s. They would be more appropriately indexed with their parent magazine and have been so indexed several times already. More duplication of effort is not needed.

BANNER MYSTERIES
MOVIE-MYSTERY MAGAZINE

These imprints, although listed in some price guides as paperbacks are, to the best of my knowledge, magazines and have been deliberately excluded.

If anyone knows of any additional series that should be included, I would appreciate hearing from you. E-mails sent to me care of the Bookscans website will be forwarded; you can e-mail me directly at kennethr_johnson@yahoo.com or send regular mail to P.O. Box 451, Medford, MA 02155.

Acknowledgments

According to my calculations this index presently lists 2722 books, of which I have personally examined a little fewer than 1400. Those not in my personal collection were accessed from a number of local sources, including the personal collections of Victor Berch, Jerry Boyajian, Robert E. Briney, and Don D'Amassa, as well as the library at the M.I.T. Science Fiction Society, and the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library at Harvard University. A few imprints were included based on detailed descriptions provided by other collectors and are acknowledged appropriately in the Publisher Index.

Numerous hardcovers used for text comparisons were accessed at The Boston Public Library and the Widener Library at Harvard University. Additional books were either accessed directly at or borrowed through inter-library loan from the following Massachusetts libraries: Concord Free Public Library, Malden Public Library, Medford Public Library, Salem Public Library, Seekonk Public Library, Taunton Public Library, and Worcester Public Library. Additional research materials, mostly photocopies, were obtained by interlibrary loan from the following out of state libraries: Bowling Green State University Library, Woodruff Library at Emory University, Michigan State University Library, The Ohio State University Libraries, Penn State Library, and University of Rochester Library.

Any work of this scope stands on the shoulders of the giants whose work preceded it. One should not have to "reinvent the wheel" with every new bibliography, and much of the information herein was drawn from standard reference works like the *National Union Catalog* or *Contemporary Authors*. The reliability of some such works is highly variable; the bibliographies in *Twentieth Century Western Writers*, for instance, are particularly dreadful. I have attempted to consult multiple sources whenever possible to improve accuracy.

The voluminous bibliography appended to this index barely suggests how wide the net was cast to find hard information on these books and their authors. Although reference sites on the World Wide Web seem to proliferate daily, there are still many published reference works I have not managed to consult. The most significant is probably Gary Lovisi's book on the "sexy digests," which continues to elude me. I had previously declined to repeat certain Addenda to Allen J. Hubin's *Crime Fiction IV* that had been posted to the Internet, out of respect for the recentness of their "publication." With the subsequent issuance of an updated version of the CD-ROM, I have, with Allen's permission and encouragement, extracted and used as much as was relevant to this index.

Several individuals deserve special mention for their efforts on this index. First, the late Victor Berch, former Special Collections Librarian at Brandeis University, for spending his well-deserved retirement lending his expertise to clueless researchers like me. His ability to locate obscure data among the resources at Brandeis, as well as the ever-escalating torrent of on-line databases, is nothing short of mind-boggling. The personal data in the Author Index would be much sparser without his extraordinary help. He is greatly missed. It would be remiss of me not to mention as well his colleague, Karen Adler Abramson, the Brandeis Archivist, in whose domain we repeatedly huddled to do our research, often rejoicing loudly at the discovery of ever more trivial data. Her help in many small ways and her patience in many large ways are greatly appreciated. It's a wonder she still spoke to us.

Second, my wife, Katherine Godfrey, who, as a Harvard alumna, used her library privileges to borrow both hardcovers and paperbacks for my perusal. She personally examined many non-circulating materials, including some volumes of the Catalog of Copyright Entries, when I could not otherwise access them myself. She also proofread all the text in this index, helping me to look much more literate than I actually is.

Third, the late George Flynn, proofreader *extraordinaire*. Several years ago, at my request, as part of a very different project, George did text comparisons of the Galaxy Novels against their prior hardcover and magazine appearances. I could not have improved upon his work and I have reused it here, regretting only that he was no longer around to help with this project directly.

A special "Thank you" to Jean Berman for the use of her scanner to make most of the text images that accompany this index. Thanks also to Bruce Brenner, Jim Cameron, Michael Feldman, Graham Holroyd, Steve Lewis, Gary Lovisi, Will Murray, Dan Roberts, Grant Thiessen and Steve Wallace for minor but valuable contributions. Jerry Boyajian and Bill Kelly deserve special mention for the extra efforts they made to dig heavily into their collections on my behalf. Special thanks also to Jolie Braun, Curator of Modern Literature and Manuscripts, The Ohio State University Libraries, for confirming the identities of three retitled reprints. Thanks also to Stephanie Breen, Assistant Librarian, Department of Early Printed Books and Special Collections, The Library of Trinity College Dublin, who disproved several of my "educated guesses" about the sources of the Steve Harragan novels, thus reducing the amount of erroneous guesswork herein.

And last, Bruce Black, for so many reasons that I can scarcely mention them all. My discovery of his Bookscans database advanced this work immeasurably; his scans allowed me to verify titles, authors, imprints, book numbers, original titles, abridgments and even artists' signatures on books I had no hope of seeing for myself. In addition, he has tirelessly dug into his own collection to answer a steady stream of questions about ever more trivial pieces of data that helped me to understand several rare imprints with complex publishing histories. Finally, his own enthusiasm for this index, his offer to host it on his website, and his efforts to transform my random data files into a work of art can never be adequately thanked.

Although I have often railed about the inadequacy and unreliability of many of the secondary resources that were used in compiling this monster, at the end of the day it must stand or fall as my own compilation and whatever errors still abound in it are entirely my own.