



# PRE-WAR HISTORY AND THE PLATINUM AGE



# The Early Beginnings of Comics - Rodolphe Töpffer

- Born in 1799 to German painter Wolfgang Töpffer in Switzerland
- Studied in Paris from 1819-1820 then returned to Switzerland to become a language teacher
- Got married in 1823 which led to him having two sons and two daughters
- Wrote short stories and plays featuring illustrations from 1825-1846
- In 1827 created *Les Amours de Vieux Bois*, considered the first comic
- Went partially blind over his life leading to comics becoming his main job
- Died in 1846 in his hometown of Geneva due to liver complications

Self Portrait



One of Rodolphe's Comics

# A New York Touch - The Yellow Kid

- Created by Richard Outcault in the 1890's to represent children of New York
- Originally created for the *New York World* but eventually put on *New York Journal*
- Due to copyright issues, both papers were able to use the *Yellow Kid* and thus he spread around
- His success proved that people liked small comedic panel based stories
- Comic panels in news papers became the new norm as other companies wished to compete



Image of Yellow Kid

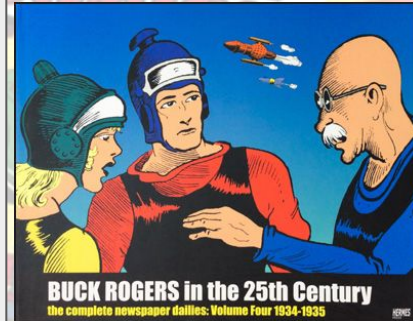
# A Switch to Action

- Comics still stayed in as small weekly newspaper strips
- Start of *Tarzan* in 1929 by Edgar Burroughs and art by Harold Foster, being one of the first action centric comics
- *Buck Roger's in the 25th Century AD* started by Philip Nowlan and Dick Calkins in 1929, marking the first science fiction comic
- *Flash Gordon* would release as a B.R. competitor by Alex Raymond in 1934
- *National Allied Publications* is founded in 1934 by Malcolm Nicholson where they were the first to print full length comic books with *New Fun*
- In 1937 Nicholson partners with magazine distributors to create *Detective Comics*

Original  
Newspaper  
*Tarzan*



Original  
Newspaper *Buck  
Rogers*



Original  
Newspaper *Flash  
Gordon*





**II**  
**ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD**

# Germany's Folly - Hitler's Rise

- Post WWI Germany was in major debt due to having to pay war reparations
- Being at an all time low, the German people looked for anyway to make their situation better
- Hitler, a failed artist turned party leader, used this uncertainty to gain power
- While originally failing with the Beer Hall riots, he would eventually gain a following
- Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933
- Hitler would use this new power to subjugate specific “undesirable” individuals as well as make alliances with the soon to be Axis Powers



Hitler and Italian dictator Mussolini

# The Nazi's Attack on Europe - The New World War

- On September 1, 1939 Germany would start WWII with the invasion of Poland
- After this they would start their take over of Europe including breaking their pact with Russia
- Germany and Italy would also begin to wage war with Britain thus spanning all of Europe
- On December 7, 1941 Japan would attack the United States, turning them from neutral to joining the side of the Allies
- The allies would help liberate France and Italy over the course of the war, leading to the gruesome death of Italian dictator Mussolini
- Up until 1945 the allies made their way towards Germany, and due to fear Hitler would kill himself instead of getting taken as a prisoner
- The war would be won in August 1945 as Japan surrendered to the US

Popular WWII Uncle Sam Recruitment image



# The Final Solution - Jewish Subjugation

- A major element of Hitler's rise to power was his war against the Jewish population
- After taking power Hitler called for the subjugation of all Jews
- In the beginning Jews were forced to wear yellow Stars of David
- Later on they were forced into ghetto neighborhoods to keep them away from the population and constantly surveyed
- On January 20, 1942 at the Wannsee Conference the "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem" was proposed and passed
- The Final Solution was the decision to round together all the Jews in death camps allowing for forced labor and easy execution
- This would lead to the death of over six million Jews

Modern Day image of the train tracks to Auschwitz

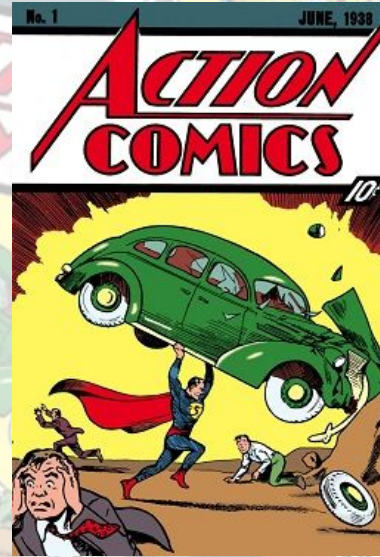




**III**  
**DAWN OF THE GOLDEN AGE**

# Action Comics #1 - The Birth of the Superhero

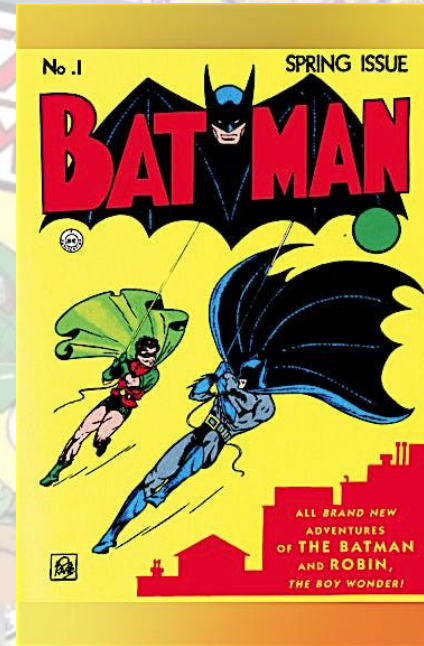
- Written by Jerry Siegel and Drawn by Joe Shuster, with complementary stories by other creators
- Released June 1, 1939 by *National Alliance Publications*
- Introduction of *Superman*, the first ever superhero
- Marks the introduction of the superhero genre
- Marked himself as the “Champion of the Oppressed”
- Creators were children of European born Jewish immigrants



Action Comics #1  
The Start of the genre

# A New Type of Superhero

- *Detective Comic #27* made by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, with supplementary stories by other creators released May 3, 1939
- This comic introduced *Batman* to the world
- *Superman #1* released in summer 1939 with *Batman #1* releasing spring 1940
- These cemented the superhero stories being its own independent genre
- This success led to the creation of other heroes such as *Aquaman* and Jay Garrick's *The Flash*.



Batman #1

# A Controversial Start - Captain America

- *Timely Publications* gets founded in 1939
- Major release is *Captain America #1* is released March 1, 1941
- Writer for this issue was Joe Simon and artist was Jack Kirby
- Cover featured Cap punching Hitler, which was controversial for its time
- Due to antisemitism Jack Kirby faced death threats over this issue, an issue he dealt with himself
- Since his beginning *Superman* had dealt with Nazi stand ins
- In 1940 *Superman* dealt with the Nazis directly in the *LOOK* magazine, *How Superman Would Win the War*



Captain America #1



Live action recreation of the cover image

# IV THE WAR'S IMPACT



# Fleischer's Superman

- In 1940 *Fleischer Studios*, *Universal*, and *National Alliances* would team up to create an animated *Superman* short to play in cinemas
- Episode 1 *The Mad Scientist* released in 1941
- Due to its success more shorts were picked up and created
- The series pushed the bounds of realistic animation due to its use of rotoscope
- After the start of the war the the series took a switch from evil scientists and monsters to more military based villains
- During war episodes include *Japoteurs* in 1942 and *Secret Agent* in 1943

Intro to the show



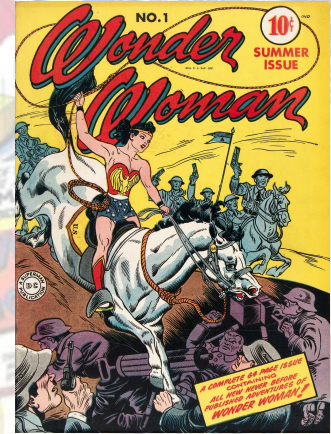
Image from *Japoteurs*

# Wonder Woman Makes the Scene

- With WWII there was a major push for strength in woman's work
- They worked in factories to help make parts and equipment for the war effort
- *All Star Comics #8* released dec 1941 written by William and Elizabeth Marston and art by H.G. Peter
- The issue was the first appearance of *Wonder Woman* and featured her rescuing WWII pilot Steve Trevor
- As she leaves her island to go with she fights on behalf of the Allies
- *Wonder Woman #1* released in January 1942 by same creators
- *Wonder Woman* would become a real world feminist icon



Wonder Woman #1



Popular "We Can Do It Image"

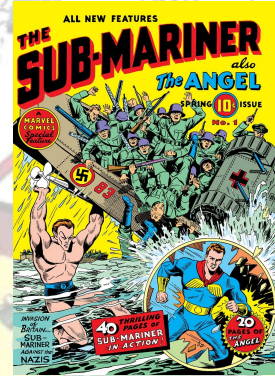
# Popular WWII Stories and Characters

- *Shazam*, first known as *Captain Marvel*, first debuted in *WHIZ Comics #2* released in 1940
- Issue was written by Bill Parker with art by C.C. Beck
- First fought Nazis back in *Whiz Comics #25* in 1941

*Shazam Jr vs  
Captain Nazi*



*Namor vs  
Nazis*



- *Namor and The Human Torch* first debuted in *Marvel Comics #1* in 1939
- Bill Everett Created Namor
- *Namor* first fought Nazis in *Sub-Mariner Comics #1* in 1941
- *The Human Torch* was by Carl Burgos
- THT first fought Nazis in *Human Torch Comics #14* in 1940

**V**  
**POST WAR LEGACY**



# The Start of the Red Scare

- After WWII the US began its war with the USSR
- This was known as the Red Scare and lasted from 1945-1991
- As WWII shaped comics, so did the Red Scare
- In *The Fantastic Four #1* made by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1961, the comic was inspired by the ongoing Space Race
- In *The Fantastic Four #1* made by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1961, the comic was inspired by the ongoing Space Race
- In *Spider-Man #1* by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko features Soviet spy *The Chameleon* as the wall crawler's first foe
- Other characters such as *Black Widow*, first appearing in *Tales of Suspense #52* by Stan Lee and Don Heck, was a soviet spy



Introduction of Red Guardian, a Soviet Captain America

# Reflective characters

## Wolverine

- First appearance in *The Incredible Hulk #180* by Len Wein and Herb Trimpe
- Real name is James Howlett but goes by Logan
- Canada born mutant with prolonged lifespan and healing
- Part of the *X-Men*
- Due to his longer lifespan, is said to have fought in WWII with Cap

Wolverine at Normandy



Nick Fury #1

## Nick Fury

- First appeared in *SGT. Fury* in May 1963 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby
- Leader of *Howling Commandos*, a WWII Allied squad
- Fought with Cap in WWII
- Later leader of organization S.H.I.E.L.D.

# Magneto

- First appearance in *Uncanny X-Men #1* in 1963 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby
- Leader of the *Brotherhood of Mutants* a group fighting violently for mutant rights
- His real name is Max Eisenhardt but goes by Erik Lehnsherr
- In 1981 Magneto was confirmed to be a holocaust survivor
- In the 2000 *X-Men* movie he was revealed to be Jewish
- In *Magneto Testament* by Greg Park and Carmine Di Giandomenico in 2009 he was confirmed in the comics to have been a jewish prisoner at Auschwitz
- Prisoner number was 214782
- His ideology that the mutants must use force to protect themselves comes from his experiences with the Nazis



Cover of  
*Magneto Testament*



Magneto  
and other  
Jews  
being  
marched in  
Auschwitz



**VI**  
**CREATORS OF NOTE**

# Stan Lee

- Born on December 28, 1922 as Stanley Martin Lieber but later changed his name to Stan Lee
- Born to Jewish immigrant parents
- First comic was *Captain America #3* in 1941
- Wrote for comics such as *Spider-man*, *Fantastic Four*, *Hulk*, *X-men*, *Thor*, and many more
- Created the Marvel Method way of story telling
- Became head of Marvel's tv and movie departments allowing him to branch onto screen
- Appears in most major Marvel movies from *Spider-man (2002)* to *Avengers Endgame*
- Died on November 12, 2018 to old age



Stan Lee at movie premiere

# Jerry Siegel - Joe Shuster

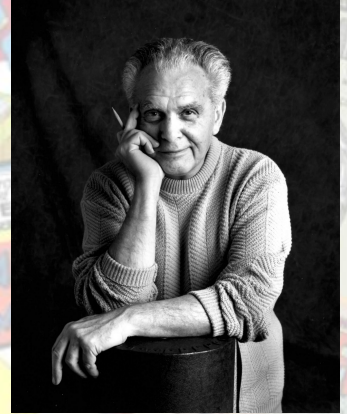
- Jerry was born on October 17, 1914 to two Jewish immigrant parents
- Born on July 10, 1914 to two Jewish immigrant parents
- Joe came to America from Canada in 1924
- Both bullied in school
- One sleepless night in 1932 led to creation of *Superman*
- Sold *Superman* for \$130 for 13 pages in 1938
- Had sympathy for European Jews and thus the early push for *Superman vs Nazis*
- Both were sadly abandoned by DC after asking for higher raise
- Joe died on July 30, 1992
- Jerry died January 28, 1996

Jerry and Joe making *How Superman Would Win the War*

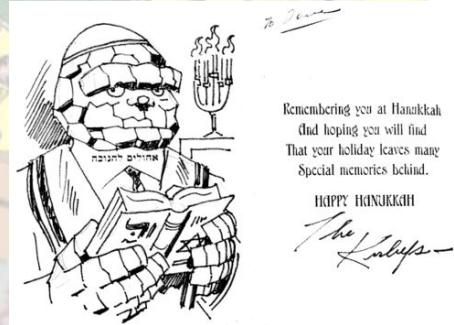


# Jack Kirby

Jack Kirby also known as the King of Comics



- Born on August 28, 1917 to two Jewish immigrants
- Raised near Essex Street, an inspiration for *The Thing's* Yancy Street
- First comic was *Captain America #1*, Kirby once almost fought anti semites that hated the cover
- Artist behind *Fantastic Four*, *Black Panther*, *Hulk*, *X-Men*, *Thor*, *Eternals*, *Etrigan*, *Darkside*, and many many more
- Left Marvel to work at DC after falling out with Stan Lee
- Known as the “King of Comics” due to his art
- Inspiration for DC and Marvel “*One Above All*” characters in recent years
- The Thing was his stand in character, leading to the character’s Jewish heritage and upbringing
- Died February 6, 1994



Holiday card showing Ben as being Jewish like Jack Kirby

# Text Work Cited

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[Essex Street](#)

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[Action Comics #1](#)

[Detective Comics 27](#)

[How Superman Would Win the  
War](#)



# Video Work Cited

- [Cap Punches Hitler](#)
- [Magneto in the Concentration Camp](#)
- [Yellow Kid](#)