



TARZAN

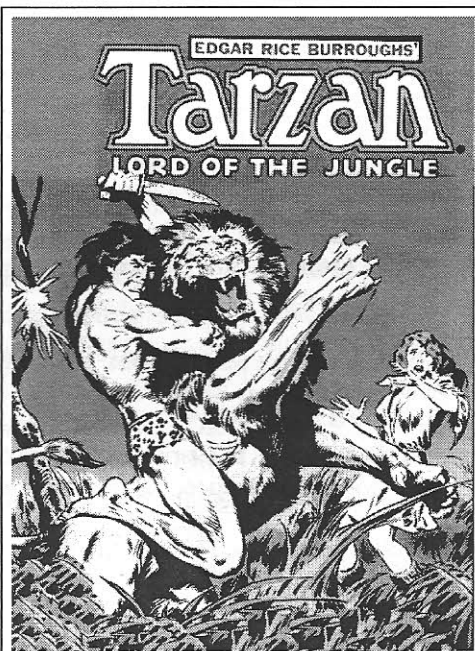
by Paul Barringer

The character of Tarzan The Ape Man was introduced in a short story published in 1912. "*Tarzan Of The Apes*" was written by Edgar Rice Burroughs' (hereafter referred to as ERB).

The story was the start of a very successful journey for ERB and The Lord Of The Jungle. ERB wrote several more books about Tarzan, which eventually led to the appearance, in 1930, of the Tarzan character in the daily comic strips, (which was the start of the continuity and adventure strips in the comics, with others to follow, such as, *Dick Tracy*, *Terry and The Pirates*, *Flash Gordon* and many others.) and later, in 1932, his appearance in a Sunday strip as well.

The hugely successful acceptance of the character in ERB's books and the comic strips, would lead to movies, other books, television, and, of course, RADIO.

The Ape Man's first appearance on radio was on September 10, 1932, when it was presented as a syndicated nationwide program set in a fifteen-minute five-days-a-week serial format with one chapter a day presented on each of the five days.



The radio program was different in a couple of ways, first in that the shows were prerecorded onto 16" Electrical Transcription discs, (similar to phonograph records) and were then shipped to the various radio stations instead of being broadcast live, as were most other radio programs during that time, and secondly in that new state-of-the-art sound effects and recording technology were used.

All of this action took place through negotiations between Frederick Dahlquist of Radio Features Syndicate and ERB. Due to the success of his books and the comic strips, ERB assumed that the "Tarzan" Radio program would have an already available audience. The first serial of "*Tarzan The Ape Man*" ran for 286 episodes. The story line for the first 130 episodes followed basically the same events covered by ERB in his first book "*Tarzan Of the Apes*". After the first 130 episodes, the program presented an adaptation, in part, of the second ERB book, "*The Return Of Tarzan*".

The first radio series cast included James H. Pierce as Tarzan, Joan Burroughs (pronounced, Jo-anne) as Jane Porter (Joan was Mrs. James Pierce and also the daughter of ERB), Fred Harrington as Lord Greystoke (Tarzan's biological father), and Eily Malyan as Lady Greystoke (Tarzan's biological mother). Other notable radio personalities appearing in the first

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RETURN WITH US NOW...



Jane Ralston, Joan Pierce, ERB, Lex Barker

radio serial "Tarzan Of The Apes" included Gale Gordon as Cecil Clayton, Hanley Stafford as Count Raoul de Coude (also as Karanoff and Lord Tennington), and Jeannette Nolan as Princess La of Opar (also Magra). Additionally in the cast were, Frank Nelson as Nickolas Rokoff, Ralph Scott as Lieutenant Paul D'Arnot, Cy Kendall as Captain Tracy, and Fred Shields as Basuli, the Waziri, among many, many others. James Knight Carden was the director.

After the first Tarzan serial on radio, ERB was said to have wanted more control over the program, so he did not renew the contract with American Radio Features. ERB took over the production of the next serial himself in March of 1934. Having his daughter, Joan, in mind, ERB wrote a stronger part for Jane in the new series, but before ERB could start production of the program, Joan Pierce exited the part due to pregnancy. Along with the pregnancy and the dropping of ERB's daughter Joan from the cast in the series, James Pierce said he no longer wanted to appear on the program without his wife.

The larger part written for Jane in this script would eventually return in the future ERB novel "Tarzans Quest". (A little side note; Jane was supposed to die in the ERB novel "Tarzan The Untamed", but thanks to his panel of critics, "his own family" who raised so much cain about it, Jane had to be restored in the sequel "Tarzan The Terrible".)

After the departure of Joan and James Pierce from the series, Carlton Kadell and a new, but quite capable supporting cast began in the second Tarzan serial on radio, "Tarzan and The Diamonds Of Asher". ERB continued with the sequential plot

where the preceding story line had been halted at the end of "The Return Of Tarzan". At this time, Jane was written out of the story.

So, in 1934, the second Tarzan serial made its debut with Carlton Kadell in the role of Tarzan, and Jeannette Nolan again in her role as Magra. The narrator for this second serial was John McIntire, (Jeannette Nolan's husband), Don Wilson appeared as Lal Taask, and Fred Shields was the director. Kadell would continue his role as Tarzan in the third serial "Tarzan and the Fires of Tohr" in 1936.

Also cast in the third serial were Gale Gordon as O'Rourke, (also played by Jack Lewis), and Barbra Luddy as Athea. John McIntire and Fred Shields were the narrators/announcers and Fred Shields directed again. According to sources, ERB's production of the radio serial "Tarzan and The Fires Of Tohr" apparently was never broadcast in this country. These broadcasts along with the other broadcasts are available on cassette and CD at various OTR radio program outlets and on the internet.

The Tarzan radio program was presented with three main focal points; dialogue, narration and sound, with sound playing a unique part in the presentation. The sound, unlike the sound in movie theaters and on television today, was subtle. I don't know how to explain it, you knew it was there, but you weren't distracted by it. Some sounds were so artful, you weren't really aware of them, but they were part of that particular moment in the program, and without them something would be missing. During the announcer's narration, you sometimes don't notice the background sounds at first, but then after paying closer attention (and replaying it) you know it is there and it is what is keeping you pulled into the narration, making it a lot more enjoyable than the loud sound effects of today.

On the first radio serial episode of Tarzan Of The Apes, "Tarzan's First Birthday" the program went as follows. The announcer opens by saying "TARZAN OF THE APES", A character of Edgar Rice Burroughs famous book, in reality is the son of a titled English couple, Lord and Lady Greystoke, who were put ashore by a mutinous crew in the jungles of West Africa. The marooned couple was left with tools and firearms, and Tarzan's mother and father built the little hut in which Tarzan is born a year afterward. It is the night of their little son's first birthday." The episode continues to describe how Lord Greystoke is attacked by a crazed ape

while chopping wood. The 350-pound beast is felled by a shot from a rifle wielded by Lady Greystoke.

During the narration of this episode, and others, the announcer is so enthralled in his description of the excitement of what is happening and speaking excitedly, that he sometimes stumbles over the words.

In the second episode "Battle with the Apes". A band of plundering Great Apes attack and kill Tarzan's parents, Lord and Lady Greystoke. In this episode, Kala (the she-ape) takes young Lord Greystoke (Tarzan) with her into the jungle, leaving behind her own dead baby. Only the apes and Tarzan's parents are heard in this episode.

The following episode, "Tarzan in Young Manhood" takes place twenty years later, where Tarzan is now grown and is described by the narrator as a "super-man". Tarzan returns to the little hut where he was born and after many trips there, by looking at the many books that his father had in the hut, is able to teach himself how to read and write (in a sense), and he finally comes to the conclusion that he is M-A-N not A-P-E. Also, in this episode Tarzan is not heard, (only grunts, groans and snarls) but does battle with Hista (The Snake) while trying to save Sabor's (The Lioness) young cub.

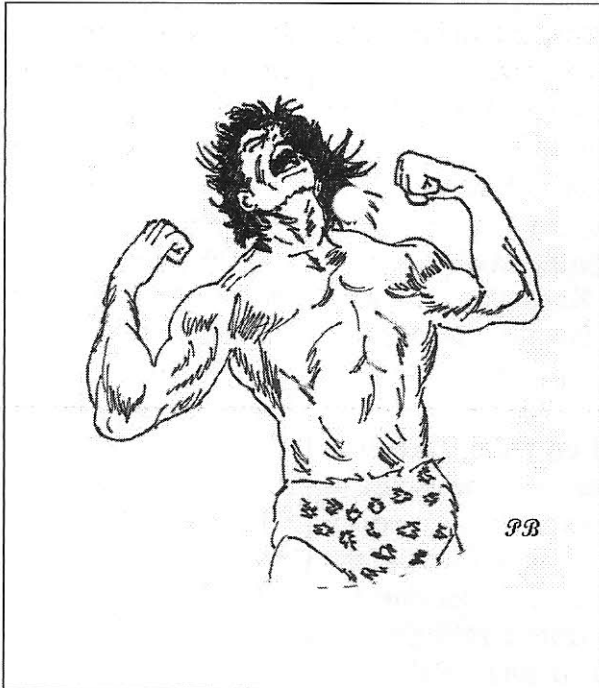
In episode #4 Tarzan again fights Hista and is rescued by Tantor (The Elephant.) It is in this episode that the Tarzan yell is first heard. The yell can best be described as a long, shrill crescendo like cry or call, unlike the cry of Tarzan in the movies. Also, Professor Porter and his daughter Jane along with William Cecil Clayton, (Tarzan's own cousin, who is the holder of the rights to the Clayton English estate, which actually belongs to Tarzan by his birthright) are heard in this episode, wherein they meet the same fate that previously happened to Lord and Lady Greystoke, a mutinous crew.

Thus you have a sampling of the start of the radio program. As the program progressed, the opening narration would change frequently, including the following presentations: "Again we bring you another episode from ERB's startling

book, Tarzan Of The Apes.", "We continue with ERB's famous story, Tarzan Of The Apes.", " Again we bring you another chapter of ERB's amazing history of Tarzan Of The Apes." And again, with this opening, "Tarzan Of The Apes, brought to you off the pages of ERB's famous book"

The opening continued to change almost constantly. "Tarzan Of The Apes, from off the pages of ERB's immoral book, we recall the strange history of Tarzan, Tarzan the mighty hunter, Tarzan the white god of a dark continent, Tarzan Of The Apes." Next the opening would change only slightly with "Tarzan Of The Apes, from off the pages of ERB's immortal book." Subsequent openings were like the above with only the words immortal book

changed to romantic novel, amazing book, astounding book, gripping book, dramatic book, exciting book, adventurous book, thrilling book, and fascinating book. Eventually the opening would contain these words, "Tarzan Of The Apes, from the novels by ERB, with Mr. James H. Pierce as Tarzan and Miss Joan Burroughs as Jane Porter." Again it would change with the above start and include, "This is an American Seal Production." Later, episodes would include the above and after American Seal Production, it would include "Released by The



World Broadcasting System and associated stations."

Now we will look at the background of the author of the Tarzan character. ERB attended several schools. While attending The Michigan Military Academy as a student, ERB failed his final exam for attending the West Point Academy. ERB worked at various jobs, including being a railroad policeman, a cowboy, and a gold miner, among others. While working as a department manager for a business magazine, E.R.B. wrote *Tarzan of the Apes* evenings and holidays. He wrote it in longhand on scrap paper and on the backs of used letterheads. At times he was doubtful that the story would even sell, and even thought it was not a very good story. However, even with these thoughts in his mind he still had good reason for thinking he could sell his

works. He had read many of the fiction and pulp magazines that were the craze, and the best sellers which were being published then, and made up his mind, that if people were paid for writing stories with such poor standards as those he read, he could write stories just as bad.

ERB's first novel sold was "A Princess of Mars". His prolific pen knew no boundaries and his stories took his loyal readers not only to the primitive African continent and the American west, but to romantic adventure on the Moon and beyond the farthest known planets. His "Tarzan Of The Apes" novel is probably one of the most valued and notable stories in American creative writing, because it is not only a story from an era past, but a story as ancient as time itself which also withstands the test of time as probably one of the most entertaining and readable books of the twentieth century.

ERB eventually wrote ninety-one novels on varying subjects and also other short stories and articles. Tarzan was the focal character in twenty-six of the novels. Although ERB produced abundant works as a writer, he did not start to write until he was 35 years old using the name Norman Bean as his pseudonym, (a fictitious or pen name assumed by a writer or author). ERB was said to have once said, "I write to escape, to escape poverty", (I would say he did very well at that)

In 1919, with the success of his books and with the first Tarzan movie grossing over a million dollars, (one of the first movies to do that.) ERB, along with his family, moved to San Fernando Valley where he converted a large piece of land into The Tarzana Ranch.

While in Hawaii in 1941, ERB witnessed the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor, after the attack, he remained there as a war correspondent for the L. A. Times. Later he returned home with a heart problem. On March 19, 1950, at home alone in his bed and after supposedly reading the Sunday comics, ERB passed away.

We now move to a few facts about Joan Burroughs. Joan Burroughs was born January 12, 1908. After exiting the Tarzan radio program, Joan continued to be very involved with the world of ERB inc., where she was secretary-treasurer and, along with her brothers, was on the board of directors of the family multi-media enterprise. In 1970, Joan had surgery for a mastectomy and muscle removal in that area, followed by a year of cobalt therapy, at which time she lost the use of her shoulder and upper left arm.

While his wife Joan was recovering from the operation, James Pierce, having clogged arteries and weighing well over 250 pounds, suffered a massive coronary. Later Pierce cut his weight some 40 pounds with diet and exercise. Just as James and Joan were planning for a leisurely and relaxing trip around the world, (now realizing the uncertainty and frailty of life), Joan suffered a heart attack at home. The last words Joan said to her husband of 44 years were, "I'll see you in the morning, sweetheart." Joan died one day later on New Year's Eve, 1972, in the hospital.

After his wife's death, James was so distraught that, only after receiving a supply of medication from doctors, was he allowed to attend the burial ceremony for his wife. As if the loss of his wife Joan, wasn't enough stress and agony for Pierce, he was put under further pressure when the urn that contained the ashes of his wife was sent to Shelbyville Illinois by mistake, when it should have been sent to Shelbyville Indiana.

James Pierce (sometimes identified and referred to as Jim) was born August 8, 1900. In 1921 Pierce attended Indiana University, where he was an All-American center in football. After graduation, he went to Arizona and was a football coach for two years. He then turned to amateur acting and went to California, remaining there to coach the Glendale high school football team. Among those on his teams, was one very recognizable name, Marion Morrison (later known as John Wayne).

Meeting Pierce at a party for daughter Joan at the Tarzana Ranch in 1926, ERB felt that Pierce was the most perfect image of his creation, Tarzan whom he had ever seen or met. ERB made arrangements through F.B.O., (Film Box Studios, the forerunner of R.K.O. Studios) for Pierce to take a screen test. Thanks to ERB's intervention and this audition, Pierce was offered the part of Tarzan in the film "Tarzan and The Golden Lion", which turned out to be one of the last silent films featuring Tarzan, and Pierce's only leading role. Pierce had previously been offered the part of Cadet White in the 1927 Academy Award-winning film, "Wings", but after some persuasion from ERB, Pierce took the \$75 a week Tarzan role and opted out of the "Wings" role that eventually went to Gary Cooper.

Pierce would go on to play minor roles in westerns, comedies and mystery films and once in a great while appeared in some major films of the sound era, but, the celebration at ERB's home was to be the most important and beneficial part in his

career. As a result of this party, ERB's daughter Joan and Pierce fell in love and later married, eventually leading to the pair portraying Tarzan and Jane on radio.

Several years later, after leaving the radio role of Tarzan, Pierce once again wanted to play the role, this time in a Talkie. ERB, still having some control of the Tarzan films being made, and with a certain clause written in the contract with the movie producer Sol Lesser, ERB used this right to have Pierce cast as Tarzan once again. Pierce, who at the time was overweight and out of the physical condition he was in earlier, lost the part to Buster Crabbe, the 1932 Olympic swimmer. It was quite ironic that the biggest, and probably most remembered role in the talkie era for Pierce was that of Prince Thun, the leader of the Lion Men, who led his Lion Men against the palace of Emperor Ming in Universal's 1936 serial "Flash Gordon, Space Soldiers", starring, who else, Buster Crabbe.

When Pierce quit his acting career in 1947, he left Hollywood to join the war effort as a commercial pilot and instructor at government aviation schools, but because private flying had changed so much during the war years, he was unable to garner the flying career he had dreamed of. Instead of a flying career, he got a broker's license and sold real estate until his retirement in 1966, and died December 11, 1983.

Other items of interest about Tarzan's radio cast members include the following: Carlton Kadell went on to star in shows such as Red Ryder, Armstrong of the SBI, and many soap operas. Cy Kendall was the circus owner in the movie "Tarzan's New York Adventure", among other Hollywood movies. The husband-and-wife team of John McIntire and Jeannette Nolan became major radio and television actors. Frank Nelson, Gale Gordon, and Hanley Stafford would go on to perform in many, many radio and TV shows, where they become some of the most recognizable voices and faces in both mediums. Hanley Stafford and Gale Gordon starred in the 1939 Fu Manchu radio serial, and all three of the above actors appeared in the 1941 radio series, Miss Pinkerton, Inc. Cy Kendall, Frank Nelson, Hanley Stafford and Gale Gordon were all in the 1937 serial "The Cinnamon Bear". We all remember Hanley Stafford on the "Baby Snooks" radio program as Daddy and who could forget Don Wilson on the Jack Benny radio and TV shows.

After ERB'S death, Commodore Productions brought the role of the Ape Man back to radio in

their 1951 radio series "Tarzan Lord Of The Jungle" based on Edgar Rice Burrough's immortal character, wherein Tarzan was played by Lamont Johnson. The opening of this show started out with the cry of The Great Ape, then continued with, "From the heart of the jungle comes the savage cry of victory. This is Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle", followed by background music, and continued with "From the black core of Dark Africa, land of enchantment, mystery and violence comes one of the most colorful figures of all time, transcribed from the immortal pen of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Tarzan, the bronze white son of the jungle! And now in the very words of Mr. Burroughs, the story of Tarzan and.... ", at this point the narrator/announcer would interject the name of the episode, this was followed once again by music. Unlike the other Tarzan shows on radio, this new format completed a story in a single half-hour presentation. Only some 70 episodes of the program were presented and it exited from radio in 1953.

The original premiere of the Tarzan radio program was presented live in the Hollywood Fox Pantages Theater. The show was sponsored in part by The Signal Oil Company, which promoted the program by offering various items at it's many gas stations across the country.

Over 20 actors have played The Ape Man in various venues, the first being "Elmo Lincoln" in the first Tarzan silent film. This statement is challenged by Tarzan trivia experts, in that, during the first third of the film a twelve-year-old young man named Gordon Griffith portrayed Tarzan in his youth. Even the claim that Elmo Lincoln was the first adult Tarzan isn't completely accurate either.

An actor named Stellan Windrow was the first person to be filmed portraying the ape man, and actually did part of the swinging and leaps in the trees, but alas, Windrow was unable to complete the filming when he was called by the government to serve in the War. His leaving resulted in two Tarzans appearing in the final cut of the movie. Elmo Lincoln was filmed doing all the fighting on the ground against the jungle animals and the other parts of the film, and Windrow was seen on the movie screen in all of the air borne shots of the ape man. When he left, National Film paid Windrow for his film rights, and because of that, he was not credited in the film. Windrow went on to serve as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. The famous actor Boris Karloff played the character, Owaza, in the film "Tarzan and the Golden Lion" (1927).

ERB's children were his greatest fans, but also were his biggest critics, as noted before when ERB wanted to have Jane die in one of his novels. ERB's son, John C. Burroughs, was also an illustrator for many of his father's books.

The Tarzan radio program almost didn't make it to the air. In July of 1932, ERB, through his secretary at ERB Inc. cancelled the contract with Frederick Dahlquist because the agreed upon date of September 1st was fast approaching and Dahlquist had only a few episodes worked out, to which ERB had not given his final approval, and none of the royalties that had been agreed upon had been received by Burroughs. The cancellation by ERB moved Dahlquist to try and persuade him to allow a little more time to straighten things out. ERB gave Dahlquist the extension, and Dahlquist got with Signal Oil to sponsor the program, worked on more scripts and assembled a cast to record the beginning episodes, and the program opened a little later than the scheduled opening date. A contract was later signed with W.B.S. to sell the program in states east of the Rockies.

At one time, the "Tarzan" book sequels had been reported to have sold over twenty-five million copies throughout the world. The books were so popular they prompted the Russian dictator, Joseph Stalin, to say that ERB was his favorite writer.

ERB Inc. was a multi-media business in the early half of the 20th century, eventually expanding into other books, pulp magazines, B.L.B.'s, comic books, movies and television, collectibles that included candy, bread, watches, coloring books, knives, bow and arrows, costumes and many other items not only in the United States, but also abroad. (*In the back of my mind I seem to even remember Tarzan ice cream.*) Quite a run for the creator and the character of "Tarzan The Ape Man".

The great apes in ERB's novels had a language of their own, and taught it to Tarzan when he was a young child, these terms are translated into English and are used in the novels. Below are a few of the many, many words I found, and their meanings. The ape's words appear first in parenthesis with the English translation following: (duro) hippopotamus, (hista) snake, (ko-sabor) mighty lioness, (kota) tortoise), (lana) sting, (lano) mosquito, (lat) nose, (lot) face, (lul) water, (lul-kor) swim, (mangani) great apes, (manu) monkey, (neeta) bird, (numa) lion, (sheeta) panther/leopard, (tantor) elephant, (tarmangani) white man, (klu) hen, (klu-kal) egg, (po) hungry, (popo) eat, (tand-popo) starve. You can

probably see some of the words are taken from other words relating to them, such as lul/water, lul-kor/swim and lana/sting, lano/mosquito, mangani/great apes, manu/monkey, (klu) hen, (klu-kal) egg, and there are others in the language not listed here. There is even a word for ant, it is (kandor)ant. There are words with more than one meaning, as there are in the English language, such as (aro) shoot/throw/cast, (balu-den) stick/branch/limb, just to name a couple. Also included in the ape language, is the word Kreeg-ah, which is the cry of the Great Ape, meaning beware/danger

After Alice and John Clayton are killed by the apes, Kala (the she ape) adopts the small child and calls him Tarzan (White Skin), which is probably a derivative of the word tarmangani in the ape language meaning "white men". This is just an assumption on my part, as I could not find the word in the ape language

ERB never did like the Tarzan films, because they did not present the character as written by him, they had him speak in single syllables, (somewhat like Tonto on The Lone Ranger radio program)and many times portrayed him humorously and immature or child-like. (unlike the books, and later in the radio series.) ERB was never able to understand why his character was not portrayed more closely along the lines of his written stories, and after his frustrations about the character fell upon deaf ears, he finally gave up and let the film producers do what they wanted to do.

The Burroughs family also wondered why their father's character was not presented more like he was in ERB's published works. The success of the Tarzan novels showed clearly that the readers had accepted ERB's portrayal of the Tarzan character and these many, many readers naturally thought the movie producers would want to keep the character as presented in the many novels and the comic strips written by ERB. But, like many other characters from various books and comics, Hollywood moved away from the original portrayal of the character in various ways. That said, the Tarzan movies were very successful and led to many adaptations of the Ape Man in all medias.

Tarzan still appears in the comics today in some newspapers and on some comic strip web sites. The first Tarzan comic strip artist was Hal Foster who, after leaving *Tarzan*, was the artist on the strip *Prince Valiant*. My favorite *Tarzan* artist was Burne Hogarth. Hogarth was a master of drawing the

human anatomy and was one of the founders of The School of Visual Arts in New York City. With his illustrations for the Sunday newspaper comic strips of Tarzan, Hogarth gained recognition worldwide, giving rise to French art critics calling him the "Michelangelo of the comic strip". I have stated before that I collect original art from the comics, and I do have some Tarzan art work by Tarzan artist John Celardo and some prints of Tarzan signed by Hogarth.

After ERBs' death a number of writers in the United States, Argentina, Israel and some Arab countries produced new Tarzan stories without the permission of his estate. These stories ranged from fighting against the Mau Mau in 1950s Kenya, to fighting a variety of monsters, vampires and invaders from outer space infesting the jungles and the continent of Africa.

Tarzan even made it to Broadway where the musical opened in May of 2006, with Josh Strickland as Tarzan and Jenn Gambatese as Jane. I think the musical is still on Broadway today, as I heard a contest on radio this morning offering tickets to see the musical program. as a prize. The musical also appeared in Holland.

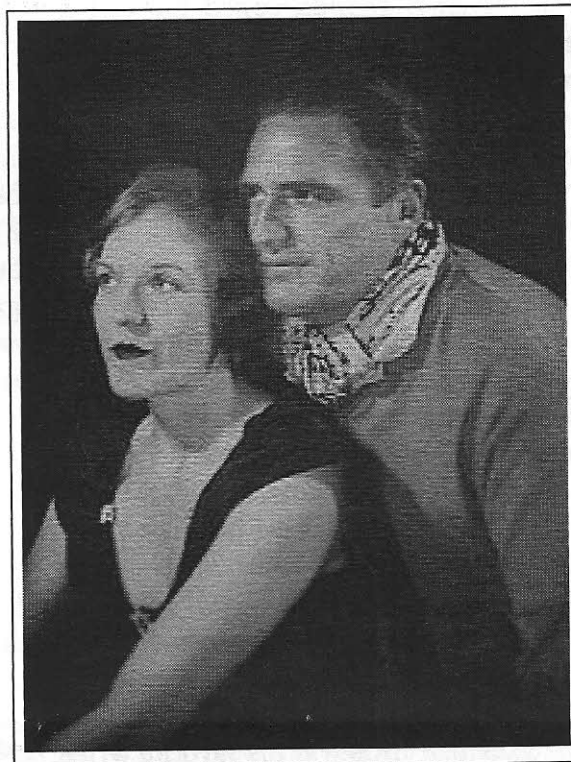
I was a big Tarzan fan growing up, but was too young when the radio adaptations were presented, so all of these realizations come from my research of the character while writing this article and from hearing the program on my cd's, some seventy years after the initial debut on the airways.

I am thankful for all of the O.T.R outlets that offer me the chance to hear all the programs I missed before I started listening to the radio.

To learn more about the "Tarzan" character, as written by ERB, I suggest you read some of his many books (as I have) that are available everywhere, or go to the ERB Inc. or Tarzan web sites on the internet. You can also subscribe to one of the many ERB fanzines or bulletins available on line, or better yet listen to the radio adventures and relive your childhood with the exciting sounds of the Ape Man's thrilling exploits, and lose yourself back in time to those days before television and create your own images of the moment, like so many of us did in the Golden Days of Radio, for in the words of Walt Disney, "While there is very little adult in a child, there is a lot of child in every adult."

RETURN WITH US NOW...

I would like to end this article with this last note, In the Pierce family plot next to the headstone of the father of James Pierce, just a short distance from the highway at The Forest Hill Cemetery in Shelbyville Indiana, lie the gravestones of James and Joan Pierce. Side-by-side headstones carry the inscriptions below



**JOAN BURROUGHS PIERCE
1908-1972**

JANE

**JAMES HUBERT PIERCE
1900-1983
TARZAN**

Research and excerpts for this article included many, many ERB and Tarzan web sites (especially Western Washington University web site), Imdb, old comic strips, videos and various Tarzan books and CD's from my collection.

---RHAC member Paul Barringer.



New in the Tape and CD Libraries

by Maletha King

There are no updates to the RHAC libraries this month. However, we do want to wish the best to all the brides, the dads and the grads!