

Edmond Hamilton
Author of Captain Future



Photo:
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Edmond Hamilton was born October, 21st 1904 in Youngstown, Ohio. He spent his childhood on a farm in Ohio. He lived without the comforts of civilization, such as electricity, running water or automobiles. In 1911 the family moved to New Castle, Pennsylvania, a town with 40.000 inhabitants. There his father worked as a cartoonist at the local newspaper.

In 1914, the ten-year-old Edmond went to high school. He finished it in the autumn of 1919 and enrolled in college at the tender age of 14 years. The age difference with the other students made this an isolated existence. He grew introverted and buried himself in books. In this way he discovered the fantastic worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs, H.G. Wells, George Allan England and of his most favourite author A. Merritt. By the means of these fantastic escapades he managed to leave behind his stressful and boring day-to-day life.

Hamilton himself commented later:

"I started my second year at college as a 15 year old intellectual. I smoked a bruyere pipe, and read Shaw, O'Neil and Ibsen. I majored in physics but after one year the lectures started to bore me."

In the following years E. Hamilton worked for the railroad company Pennsylvania Railroad. A few years later he lost his job, sat down at a typewriter and wrote his first story. The job with the railroad company would be the first and only time in his life he had a steady job and fixed income.

He debuted as an author in 1926 with the story "The Monster-God of Marmurth", which was published in the August edition of the pulp magazine WEIRD TALES. But his first professional sale was the novel "Across Space", which was printed in three parts from September to November 1926 in WEIRD TALES. The next 22 years Edmond Hamilton remained with the magazine.

Edmond Hamilton did not write science fiction exclusively. After 1932 he also penned detective stories to earn some money. His first story of this kind was published in DETECTIVE-STORY-MAGAZINE and till the end of the 1930s he sold quite a lot of crime and detective stories.

Hamilton's stories about Captain Future were published from 1940 to 1944 in their own pulp magazine called CAPTAIN FUTURE. For those four years every quarter saw the appearance of a new "Captain

Future - Wizard of Science (resp. Man of Tomorrow) for 15 cents apiece. All in all 17 issues were published (no novel was published in the autumn 1943). Later on they were reissued in the magazine STARTLING STORIES, which consisted primarily of the writing of Edmond Hamilton.

Profiting from a new law that exempted all men over the age of 38 from military service, Hamilton had not to serve with the armed forces in Europe in 1943. Even though he was spared the horrors of World War II it was a hard time for him, because both his parents were seriously ill.

On December, 31st 1946 he married Leigh Brackett in San Gabriel, California. Leigh Brackett was born December, 7th 1915 and published her first science fiction story "Martian Quest" in the February edition of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. In the course of her life she was not only very successful in writing science fiction, she also made herself known by writing for the movies. She penned the scripts for such famous films such as "The Vampire's Ghost", "Rio Bravo", "Hatari", "El Dorado" and finally "Star Wars Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back"

Even though they were both very successful SF-writers, in 31-years of marriage they never wrote a single book together. On the contrary, they only showed each other their work when it was completely finished.

In 1964 Hamilton and his wife were invited as guests of honor to 22. World Science Fiction Convention in Oakland. And in 1967 Edmond Hamilton was inducted into the First Fandom Science Fiction Hall of Fame.

After his death on February, 1st 1977, the EDMOND HAMILTON MEMORIAL AWARD was founded. It is given to authors that manage to convey the "sense of wonder" in their works. After the death by cancer of Leigh Brackett on March, 18th 1978 the award was renamed HAMILTON BRACKETT MEMORIAL AWARD.

Looking back at his career Hamilton once said:

"I still think it was crazy when I decided to earn money solely by writing science fiction ... but it worked. Since 1925, when I wrote my first story I have never done anything else. It was a truly rewarding career, not monetary, but regarding friendships; and I fulfilled some old dreams of mine."