



123 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302

HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION REPORT



EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS HOUSE no. 1 414 Augusta Street

Preliminary Determination of Eligibility by the
Historic Preservation Commission on October 12, 2017

Village Landmark Ordinance approved by the
Village Board of Trustees on

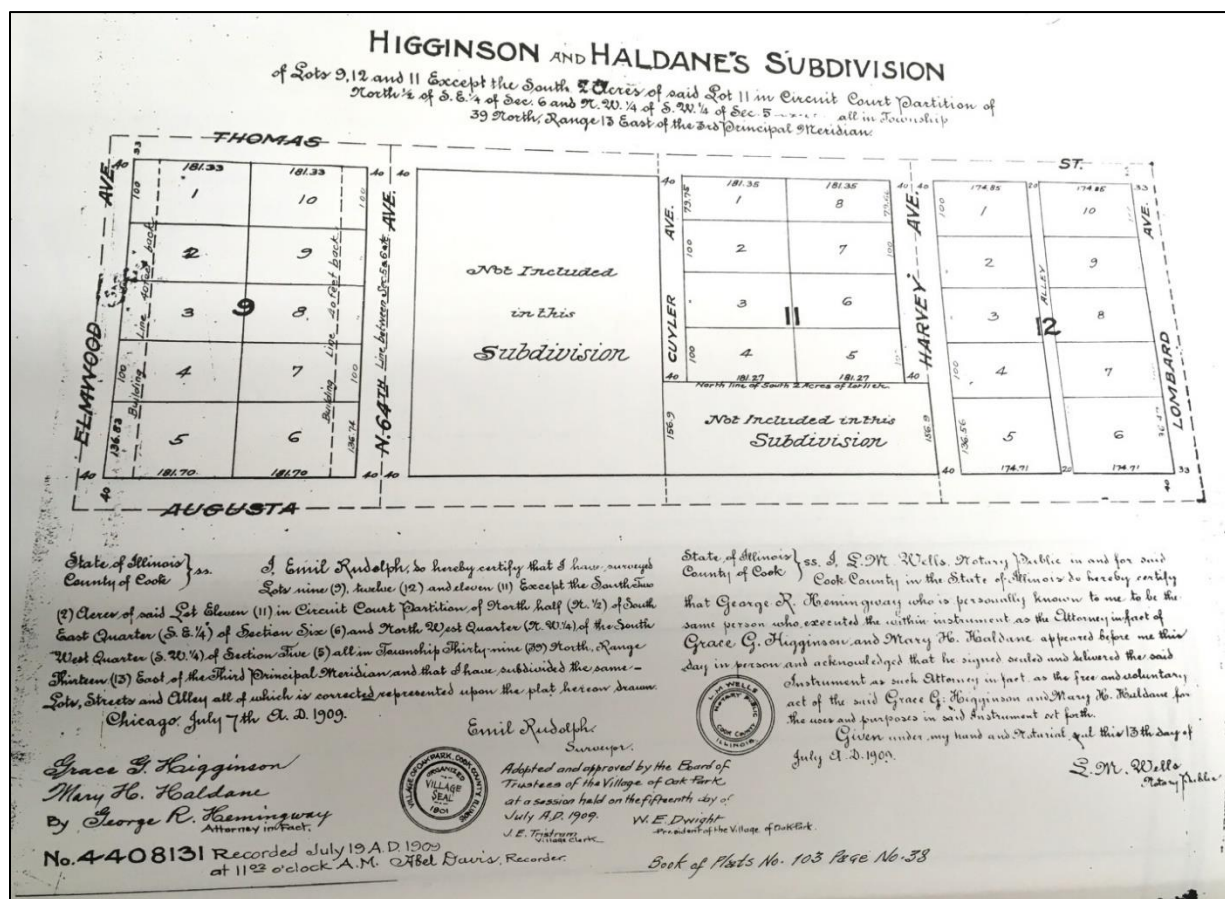
Edgar Rice Burroughs House no. 1

414 Augusta Street

Built: 1911-1912
 Owner: May M. Skinner
 Contractor: W. C. Franck

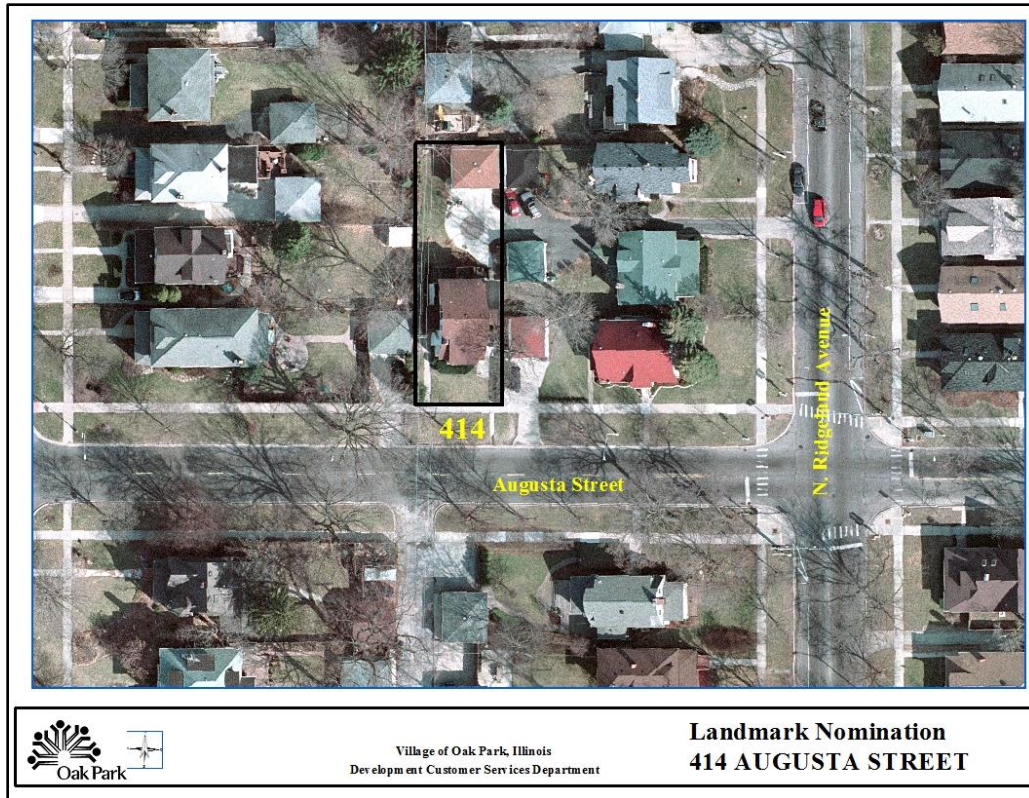
The *Edgar Rice Burroughs House no. 1* is significant for its association with Edgar Rice Burroughs during his early years as an author. Burroughs and his wife Emma purchased the house on November 27, 1914 from May M. Skinner. The two- and one-half story frame and stucco house is designed in the Tudor Revival style with Craftsman influences. The house was constructed by local contractor Walter C. Franck.

The Edgar Rice Burroughs House no. 1, located at 414 Augusta Street in Oak Park, Illinois, is set back approximately 20 feet from the street, and faces south. The lot is 45.58 x 136 feet. On July 19, 1909 the property was part of a subdivision created by Grace G. Higginson and Mary H. Haldane, with the assistance of real estate attorney and developer George R. Hemingway. Lot 6 in block 9 was subdivided into four lots, which became 414 Augusta (1911-12) and 701 (1912), 707 (1912) and 711 N. Ridgeland (1914).¹



Source: Cook County Recorder of Deeds

¹ Building permit records are on file with the Village of Oak Park.



The house is two-stories with a high side gable. The house is clad with a rough-textured stucco. The asymmetrical façade has a two-story projecting bay with half-timbering and a brick skirt wall. There are banks of 6/6 double-hung windows on each floor. The main entrance is located in a one- and two-story wing on the east side of the house. There is a one-story enclosed entrance porch on the west side and a brick chimney clad in stucco below the eave-line.



Main entrance in the one and two-story east wing



West façade



One-story entrance porch on west facade

Changes

There have been numerous alterations to the house over the years. The original 6/6 wood double-hung windows were replaced with vinyl casement windows but were later restored to their original appearance with Marvin Ultimate aluminum-clad wood windows in 2010. The mansard roof of the west entry porch was altered into a side gable, and new stairs with railings were added. It is not known if the mansard was original.



The house in 2009 prior to west porch alteration and window replacement

Based on comparison of a 1915 photograph of the house, it appears that the east entrance and stoop were added later, replacing what may have been a bay window. The brick skirt wall is also a later addition, and may have been added at the time of the porch and entrance alterations. The rear

two-story garage, accessed through a shared drive from Ridgeland Avenue, is also recent. A permit for a new asphalt shingle roof on the house was issued in 2017.

Significance

The house at 414 Augusta is significant for its association with author Edgar Rice Burroughs, where he lived with his family from 1914-1917, and where he wrote twelve novels. Burroughs was a prolific author of science fiction, and his name became synonymous with his most famous creation – Tarzan of the Apes. He wrote twenty-four Tarzan novels published between 1912-1935. He also wrote numerous other series, including *John Carter of Mars*, *The Land That Time Forgot*, *Pellucidar*, *Venus* as well as many individual novels of adventure. By the time of his death in 1950, Burroughs had written ninety-four novels, along with the production of twenty-six Tarzan movies (there would ultimately be fifty-one movies – the last in 2005). Influential science fiction author Ray Bradbury had this to say about Burroughs:

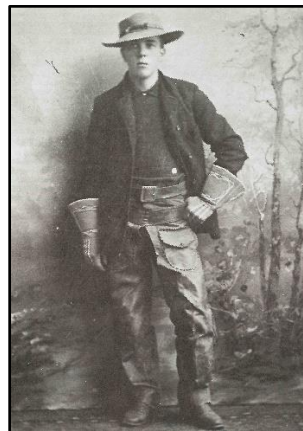
*"I love to say it because it upsets everyone terribly – Burroughs is probably the most influential writer in the entire history of the world. By giving romance and adventure to a whole generation of boys, Burroughs caused them to go out and decide to become special. That's what we have to do for everyone, give the gift of life with our books. Say to a girl or boy at age ten: Hey, life is fun! Grow tall! I've talked to more biochemists and more astronomers and technologists in various fields, who, when they were ten years old, fell in love with John Carter and Tarzan and decided to become something romantic. Burroughs put us on the moon. All the technologists read Burroughs."*²

Edgar Rice Burroughs

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born in Chicago, Illinois on September 1, 1875 to Maj. George Tyler Burroughs and Mary Evaline Jaeger. He was the youngest of four boys growing up on the west side of Chicago near Washington and Damen, just west of Union Park.³ The family was prosperous and middle-class – his father owning the American Battery Company – and so he ultimately attended the Harvard School on Chicago's wealthier south side. His father pulled him out of the school due either to poor health or poor grades, and sent him to southern Idaho where his two older brothers George and Harry ran a cattle ranch owned by the family.⁴



Edgar Rice Burroughs, c. 1885



Edgar Rice Burroughs in Idaho, 1891

Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan (Left: p. 8, Right: p. 20)

² Ray Bradbury and Sam Weller, Listen to the Echoes: The Ray Bradbury Interviews, Stop Smiling Books, 2010.

³ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 9.

⁴ Porges, p. 19.

After spending a few months in Idaho, his father enrolled him at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts in the fall of 1891. The school requested he be withdrawn as a student following a lack of effort after only one term.⁵ Feeling discipline is what was needed, his father then sent him to the Michigan Military Academy in Orchard Lake, Michigan, where he remained until graduation in 1895.⁶ He returned the next year as an instructor, but remained only until 1896.



Edgar Rice Burroughs in his football uniform,
and on his horse "Belle" at the Michigan Military Academy, 1895
Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan (Left: p. 39, Right: p. 45)

Tiring of school, and having failed the entrance examination to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he was given permission by his parents to enlist in the U.S. Cavalry.⁷ He was assigned to Seventh U. S. Cavalry at Fort Grant, Arizona Territory. Burroughs' mission, as he put it, was to "chase the Apaches". *"I chased a good many Apaches", he tells us, "But fortunately for me, I never caught up with any of them."*⁸ Life in the west did not turn out to be what he had hoped, and Burroughs enlisted the help of his father to get him discharged in 1897.

⁵ Porges, p. 27-28.

⁶ Porges, P. 54.

⁷ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 53.

⁸ www.edgariceburroughs.com, "Edgar Rice Burroughs – Master of Adventure," Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., 2017.



Burroughs (rear left) at Fort Grant, 1896
 Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan (p. 52)

Now looking for work, he became the proprietor of a stationary store in Pocatello, Idaho with the assistance of his brother Harry.⁹ Around 1899 he sold the store back to the original owner, stating, “*God never intended me for a retail merchant!*”¹⁰ He then rejoined his brothers on their cattle ranch. During this time he tried to gain a commission in the military. Unable to do so, he returned to Chicago to work for his father at the American Battery Company.

Since he was young, Burroughs had been devoted to neighbor Emma Centennia Hulbert. He reportedly proposed marriage to her several times over the years, only for her to decline each time. Finally back in Chicago and seemingly ready to settle down, he again proposed; this time the answer was yes. They were married in Chicago on January 31, 1900.¹¹

⁹ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 70.

¹⁰ Porges, p. 72.

¹¹ Ancestry.com. *Cook County, Illinois, Marriages Index, 1871-1920* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.



Emma Centennia Hulbert in 1900



Emma and Burroughs in Chicago, c. 1900

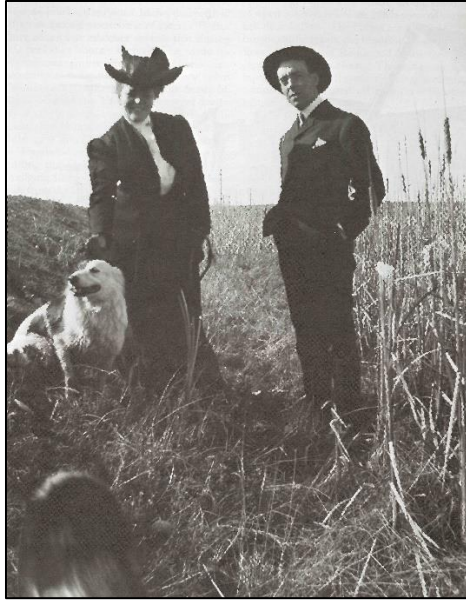
Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan (Left: p. 76, Right: p. 78)

Burroughs finally tired of the settled life, and working for his father, and in 1903 he and Emma moved to Idaho. Still in Idaho, his older brothers had left the cattle business and formed the Yale Dredging Company, which later became the Sweetser-Burroughs Mining Company, and had invited Burroughs and Emma to join them.¹² The couple settled in Parma, Idaho, where Burroughs decided to enter politics, and by one vote was elected alderman in 1904. However, soon after the mining company failed, and Burroughs, with help of his brother Harry, obtained a job as a railroad policeman for the Oregon Railroad Company. The couple moved to Salt Lake City.¹³

After several months, Burroughs resigned from his job and the couple returned to Chicago in 1904, staying with the Hulbert family. Burroughs found himself moving from job to job, including timekeeper at a construction site, door-to-door salesman and office manager, before obtaining the position of manager of a clerical division at Sears, Roebuck & Company. During this period he again tried to obtain a commission in the military, to no avail.

¹² Porges, p. 81.

¹³ Porges, p. 90.



Emma and Burroughs in Parma, Idaho, 1904



Ed hanging laundry in Salt Lake City, c. 1904

Porges, Irwin. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan (Left: p. 87, Right: p. 90)

Although Burroughs was successful in his job at Sears, he left to enter business for himself. His first business was a partnership called Burroughs and Dentzer, where they provided a correspondence course in advertising.¹⁴ This business failed as well. In 1929 Burroughs noted that,

*"At last I got placed as an agent for a lead pencil sharpener. I borrowed office space, and while subagents were out, trying unsuccessfully to sell the sharpener, I started to write my first story. I had good reason for thinking I could sell what I wrote. I had gone thoroughly through some of the all-fiction magazines and I made up my mind that if people were paid for writing such rot as I read I could write stories just as rotten. Although I had never written a story, I knew absolutely that I could write stories just as entertaining and probably a lot more so than any I chanced to read in those magazines."*¹⁵

By 1911 the Burroughs family had grown to four – daughter Joan was born in 1908 and son Hulbert in 1909. His first story, Under the Moons of Mars, which was later published in book form as A Princess of Mars, was accepted by *All-Story Magazine* and at age 35 Burroughs received his first paycheck for writing. He then decided he would make writing his career. Burroughs remembered,

*"I finished the second half of the story, and got \$400 for the manuscript, which at that time included all serial rights. The check was the first big event in my life. No amount of money today could possibly give me the thrill that first \$400 check gave me."*¹⁶

His second story in 1911 was The Outlaw of Torn a historical romance set in medieval England. This was written at the suggestion of the magazine editor. However, the book did not sell. Just one week after finishing the book, December 1, 1911, he began working on a new story about a boy found in the jungles of Africa following the death of his parents and adopted by an ape.¹⁷ In 1912 Burroughs

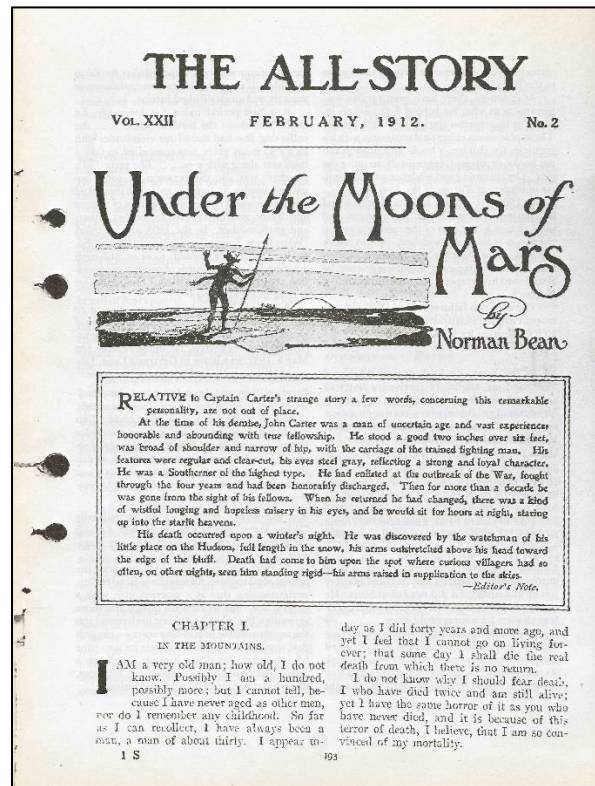
¹⁴ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 105.

¹⁵ Edgar Rice Burroughs, "How I Wrote the Tarzan Books," The Washington Post & New York World Sunday Supplement "The World Magazine," October 27, 1929 (www.erbzine.com).

¹⁶ Edgar Rice Burroughs, "How I Wrote the Tarzan Books," The Washington Post & New York World Sunday Supplement "The World Magazine," October 27, 1929. (www.erbzine.com)

¹⁷ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 124.

began working for *System* magazine. Tarzan of the Apes appeared in *All-Story Magazine* in October 1912, and his career as a writer took off.



Original 1912 story
Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan,
Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 102.

While often asked what spurred the idea to write Tarzan of the Apes, Burroughs could never relate to one specific source. *"Perhaps the fact that I lived in Chicago and yet hated cities and crowds of people made me write my first Tarzan story....Tarzan was, in a sense, my escape from unpleasant reality. Perhaps that is the reason for his success with modern readers. Maybe he takes them, too, away from humdrum reality."*¹⁸

In 1912 he completed the second in the John Carter of Mars series – The Gods of Mars, which ran in *All-Story Magazine* in 1913.¹⁹ Their third child John Coleman, known as Jack, was born in 1913, and Burroughs had recently completed his Tarzan sequel, The Return of Tarzan, for which he was paid \$1,000. The story ran in *New Story Magazine*.²⁰ It was in 1913 that he decided to leave his job at *System* magazine and devote all of his time to writing.

In 1913 there was interest in running his Mars series and Tarzan series in syndication. Burroughs realized the economic potential of this, and retained the rights to his stories, becoming one of the first authors to do so. During this period he continued writing other stories as well, selling them to magazines at the highest bid, as well completing the trilogy in the Mars series. He not only used his

¹⁸ Porges, p. 133-134.

¹⁹ Porges, p. 147.

²⁰ Porges, p. 154.

imagination to create fantastic stories, but was a shrewd businessman in his dealings with editors and publishers.

In the fall of 1913 the family moved to California for the winter. Burroughs later noted that, “...I had decided that I was too rich to spend my winters in Chicago so I packed my family, all my furniture, my second-hand automobile and bought transportation for Los Angeles.”²¹ They lived for a time in Coronado and then San Diego. During this time he continued writing, including The Mucker, which he sold in March 1914 for his largest sum yet – \$1,450.²² Later that month he sold the third Tarzan story, The Beasts of Tarzan, to All-Story Magazine for \$2,500.²³

Having finally reached financial security with numerous sales, and a book deal for Tarzan of the Apes, the Burroughs family returned to Chicago. With a desire to purchase their first home somewhere suitable to raise their three children, they moved to 414 Augusta in Oak Park. Although they moved in on May 11, 1914, the sale was not recorded until November 27, 1914.²⁴



Emma Burroughs with children Jack, Joan and Hulbert in front of 414 Augusta Street, 1915
(Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Irwin Porges, 1975, p. 196)

²¹ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 167.

²² Porges, p. 177.

²³ Porges, p. 180.

²⁴ The chain of title was obtained at the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, 118 N. Clark Street, Chicago.

Burroughs' office in these early Oak Park years was in his home on Augusta. One writer reported, "Three beautiful children, Joan, Hulbert and Jack, the oldest six, clamber over Mr. Burroughs' anatomy, and desk and typewriter while he is turning out the tales you all clamor for. 'Were I literary,' he says, 'and afflicted with temperament I should have a devil of a time writing stories...'"²⁵



Hulbert, Emma, Jack and Joan, c. 1915

(Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Irwin Porges, 1975, p. 195)

Their first year at the house on Augusta saw Burroughs continuing several of the independent stories already begun in 1913, as well as the second story in the Pellucidar series, titled Pellucidar. He also continued writing books in the Tarzan series, including the fourth book, The Son of Tarzan, the fifth book, Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar, and the sixth book, Jungle Tales of Tarzan. By March 1917 he had completed twelve stories while residing at 414 Augusta. 1914 also saw Tarzan of the Apes finally published in book form.



Joan, Ed, Hulbert, Jack and Emma at 414 Augusta Street, 1915

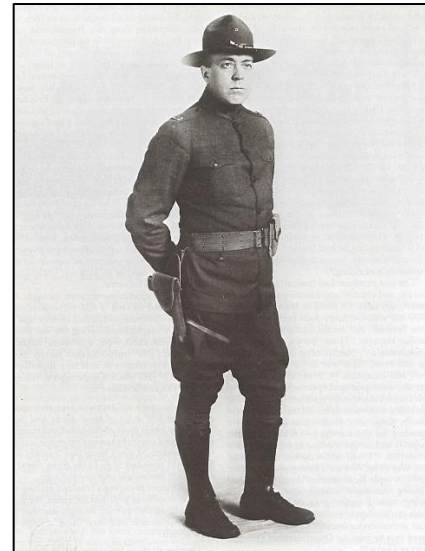
(Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Irwin Porges, 1975, p. 190)

²⁵ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 191.

In 1917 the family moved to a much grander house at 700 Linden, though retained ownership of 414 Augusta. They only lived here for one year, where he wrote the completion of a story he started in 1916 and the first two parts of The Land That Time Forgot.²⁶ They sold the house on Linden and planned to move to California, but Burroughs applied for and received a commission as a captain in the Illinois Reserves, eventually rising to the rank of major.²⁷ The result was that they stayed in Oak Park so he could remain active in the militia during the war. The rented a large home at 325 N. Oak Park (now demolished), where they resided until they sold their house on Augusta on January 30, 1919 to George and Minerva Sloan and moved to a ranch in California, which eventually became the town of Tarzana.²⁸



The Burroughs home at 700 Linden, 1917



Burroughs in the Illinois Reserve Militia
Oak Park, 1918

(Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Irwin Porges, 1975, Left: p. 284, Right: p. 286)

TWO HOMES AND A VACANT LOT

Owner Leaving Town



A high-class residence in the best part of Oak Park; reinforced concrete construction, double walls; eight bedrooms, three baths, four toilets, sun parlor and glazed sleeping porch; garbage incinerator; insulated hot-water heating plant with thermostat control; billiard room, tool room, vegetable and other storage rooms.

This home is situated on a corner lot 132 feet 9 inches by 135 feet, in Oak Park's most exclusive residence district; streets and alley fully paved and all improvements in. Could not be duplicated now under \$30,000.

Also, residence at 414 Augusta street, near Ridgeland; lot 45x136; five bedrooms, two baths, three toilets, sleeping porch; best hot-water heating plant in Oak Park; fine garage with running hot and cold water, drain, and hot-water heating connection with house. All improvements in, and finely paved streets. Now rented until May 1, and present tenant will remain if purchaser desires. Cost \$8,500. Material reduction to responsible purchaser, including terms.

Also, vacant residence lot, 50x181, on Ridgeland avenue north of Augusta. This is the last lot on this block and is steadily increasing in value. Will sell at a reasonable figure.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TELEPHONE OAK PARK 1123, OR WRITE TO

Edgar Rice Burroughs

700 Linden Avenue

Oak Park, Ill.

Burroughs' advertisement to sell the Augusta and Linden homes
(Oak Leaves, March 16, 1918, p. 39)

²⁶ Irwin Porges, Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975, p. 297.

²⁷ "Distinguished Citizen to Leave Oak Park," The Oak Parker, January 18, 1919, p. 16.

²⁸ The chain of title was obtained at the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, 118 N. Clark Street, Chicago.

Burroughs was one of the first artists to incorporate, which he did in 1923 for tax reasons and for more control over his works. Edgar Rice Burroughs, Incorporated, controls all literary rights and the shares were distributed among the family. Burroughs received a salary for the rest of his life.²⁹ The company remains in the hands of the Burroughs family, which manages and licenses all of Burroughs' work.

Burroughs' books were published through the company from 1931 (Tarzan the Invincible) through 1948 (Llana of Gathol), with one additional title (I Am a Barbarian) appearing in 1967. By 1929 Burroughs had sold of over 7,000,000 copies of his work world-wide, which had been translated into 16 different languages.³⁰ His first movie, *Tarzan of the Apes*, was the first film in history to gross over \$1,000,000 at the box office.³¹

By the mid- thirties, Burroughs was "big business." Daily and Sunday comic strips appeared in over 250 newspapers all over the world; millions of Tarzan comic books were published and sold; and a Tarzan radio serial thrilled its listeners across the country, with Burroughs' daughter, Joan, in the role of Jane, and her husband, James H. Pierce, as Tarzan. Today, Tarzan television programs are syndicated to more than 200 TV stations in the U.S. and abroad. A Tarzan movie plays somewhere in almost every country of the world every day. With the contemporary emphasis on outer space, Burroughs' science fiction writings are being printed in even greater numbers.³²

In 1942 Burroughs served as America's oldest war correspondent, covering stories with the Pacific Fleet with United Press.³³ He returned home after suffering several heart attacks. Edgar Rice Burroughs died at his home in Encino, Los Angeles, California on March 19, 1950.³⁴

In an earlier interview, Burroughs confirmed the fact that he wrote all his stories, particularly those of other worlds, as much for his own entertainment as for that of his readers.

"In all these years I have not learned one single rule for writing fiction. I still write as I did 30 years ago; stories which I feel would entertain me and give me mental relaxation, knowing that there are millions of people just like me who will like the same things I like. Anyway, I have great fun with my imaginings, and I can appreciate—in a small way—the swell time God had in creating the Universe."

²⁹ www.erbzine.com (Bio Timeline: 1920-1929, Bill Hillman)

³⁰ George Currie, "A First Glance at New Books," *Brooklyn Daily Herald*, September 20, 1929, p. 24

³¹ www.edgariceburroughs.com, "Edgar Rice Burroughs – Master of Adventure," Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., 2017.

³² Ibid.

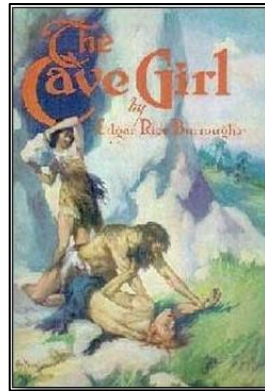
³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ancestry.com. *California, Death Index, 1940-1997* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000.

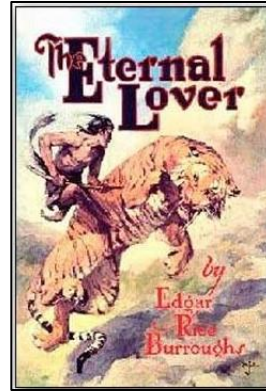
Chronology of work written by Burroughs while living at 414 Augusta in Oak Park:



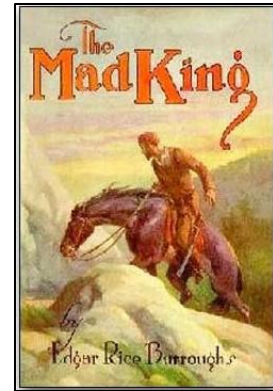
April-June, 1914



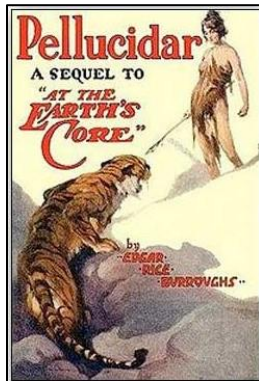
July-August, 1914
(part 2: The Cave Man)



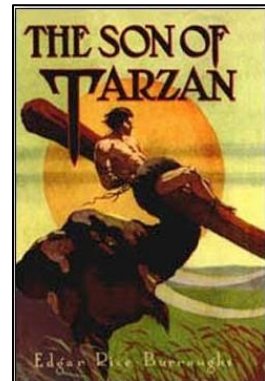
August-September, 1914
(part 2: Sweetheart Primeval)



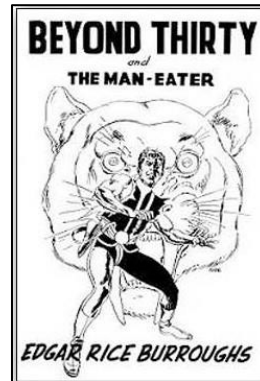
Sept.-Nov., 1914
(part 2: 'Barney Custer of Beatrice')



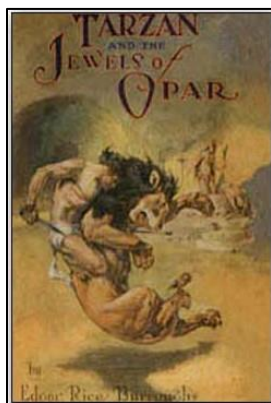
Nov. 1914 - Jan, 1915



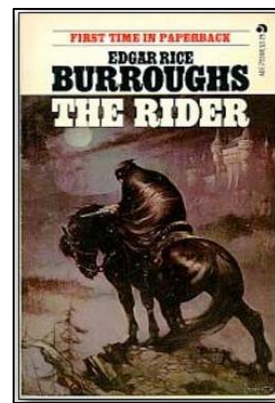
January-May, 1915



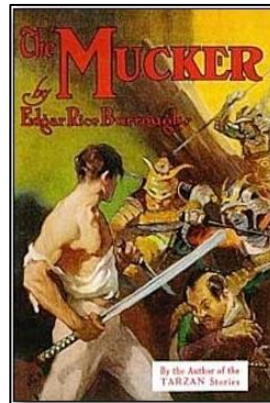
The Man-Eater: May-Jun., 1915
Beyond Thirty: July-Aug., 1915



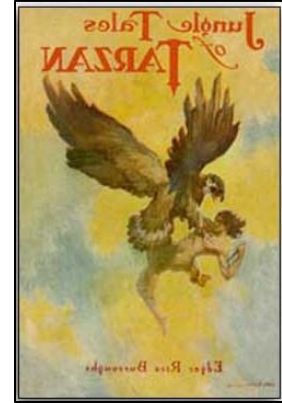
Sept.-Oct., 1915



Oct.-Dec., 1915



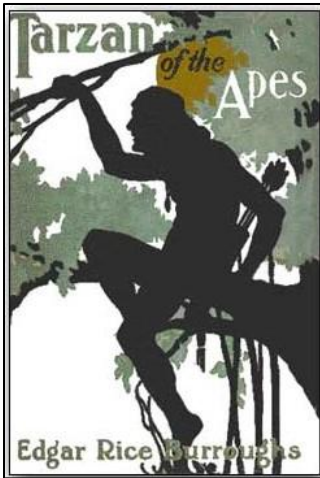
Jan.-March, 1916



March, 1916-March, 1917
(first three of twelve)

(All illustrations courtesy of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.)

Books published while Burroughs lived at 414 Augusta:



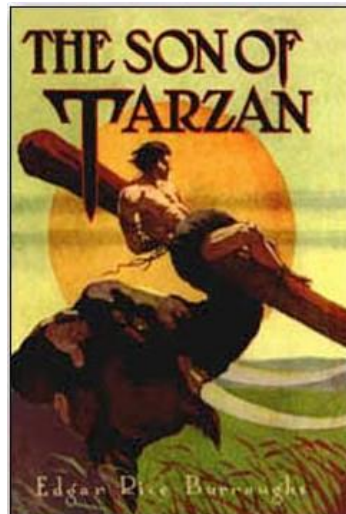
1914 book cover



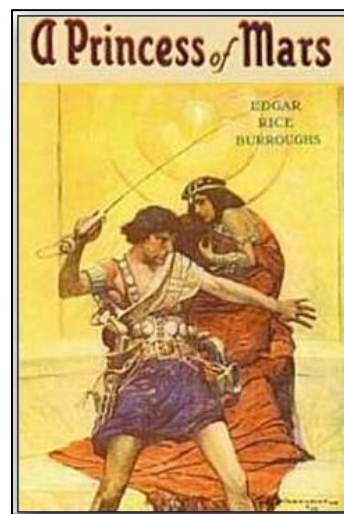
1915 book cover



1916 book cover



1917 book cover



1917 book cover

(All illustrations courtesy of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.)

Criteria for Designation

According to Section 7-9-6(B) of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission must make a preliminary determination of eligibility after receiving a nomination. A determination of preliminary eligibility must be based upon a finding that there is a likelihood that a nominated historic landmark will meet one or more of the "Criteria for Designation" set forth in Section [7-9-5](#) of this Article.

The Edgar Rice Burroughs House no. 1 was nominated under the following criteria:

Criterion 3: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States.

The house at 414 Augusta is significant for its association with author Edgar Rice Burroughs, where he lived with his family from 1914-1917, and where he wrote twelve stories. Burroughs and his wife Emma purchased the house on November 27, 1914 from May M. Skinner. Burroughs was a prolific author of science fiction, and his name became synonymous with his most famous creation – Tarzan of the Apes. He wrote twenty-four Tarzan novels published between 1912-1935. He also wrote numerous other series, including *John Carter of Mars*, *The Land That Time Forgot*, *Pellucidar*, *Venus* as well as many individual novels of adventure. By the time of his death in 1950, Burroughs had written ninety-four novels, along with the production of twenty-six Tarzan movies (there would ultimately be fifty-one movies – the last in 2005). By 1929 he had sold over 7,000,000 copies world-wide, and the first Tarzan of the Apes movie was the first film to gross over \$1,000,000.

References

Primary and unpublished sources

Village of Oak Park building permits. (Copies of the permits are available on microfiche at the Oak Park Village Hall, Permit Processing Division, Development Customer Services Department).

- Permit no. 3272, dated 1 November 1911. Owner: May M. Skinner; Contractor: W. C Franck; Two-story stucco residence; cost valued at \$4,000.
- Permit no. 3818, dated 10 October, 1912. Owner: W. C. Franck; Contractor: W. C Franck; Two-story stucco residence; cost valued at \$4,000.

Secondary and Published Sources

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