

Kirby, Jack (1917-1994) Encyclopedia Article

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One of the most prolific and influential comic-book creators, Jack Kirby is deservedly known as "the king of comics." Kirby, born Jacob Kurtzberg, grew up on New York's tough Lower East Side. The brawls and colorful characters of his youth influenced his work, from the explosive fight scenes to the numerous kid-gangs he created (Newsboy Legion, Boy Commandos, among others). In 1940, Kirby teamed with Joe Simon, and they created scores of comic books, including the first romance comic. In March 1941, their most famous creation, Captain America, debuted in *Captain America Adventures*. Over the next 20 years, Kirby virtually created the visual language of super-hero comics. His panels were crammed with dynamic action and visual excitement. Perhaps Kirby's best work was in the 1960s when he and writer-editor Stan Lee transformed faltering Atlas Comics into pop culture powerhouse Marvel Comics, with characters such as the Fantastic Four and the X-Men.

Further Reading:

Harvey, Robert C. *The Art of the Comic Book*. Jackson, Mississippi, University Press of Mississippi, 1996.

Theakston, Greg. *The Complete Jack Kirby: 1940-1941*. New York, Pure Imagination Publishing, 1997.