

# The Making of the “First Sound Cachet”

By Gladys West-Jones

As a child growing up in the deep south of Natchez, Mississippi, I recall that there weren't a lot of televisions in the black community, and the one we had was black and white. This was an era when playing outside, making up games, and smelling like sunshine were the epitome of being a kid. You see, I was a tomboy who loved the outdoors and climbing trees. I also loved watching TV, and one of my favorite shows was “Tarzan”. I never missed an episode.

When I learned that the Edgar Rice Burroughs stamp was being issued, and that he was the creator of “Tarzan”, my motivation for making a cachet was as strong as a rabid dog. As my mentor, Florence “Via” Villaseñor, has taught me, before you make a cachet, you study your subject by doing a lot of research. So, that's what I did.

I wanted to capture in my cover the essence of Tarzan, the “King of the Jungle”. With all that I wanted to do, I realized that it would take more than one cover. I started with wanting to know all of the actors who played Tarzan on television and in the movies. I discovered that there were 23. So I decided to write about all of them including where they are today. Second, I wanted to know more about Edgar Rice Burroughs. Having just seen the movie “John Carter of Mars”, and hearing the advertisers say that it took Burroughs 100 years to produce, I wanted to know what else Burroughs had accomplished.

While I was pressed for time, the ideas for how to make the covers before the release of the stamp in Tarzana, California, the namesake of Burroughs' character, grew, and I was able to attend the unveiling of the stamp at the ceremony. Just prior to the ceremony, a sound bite was played that opened a flood gate of memories for me from the TV show of my childhood. . . in particular, the “Tarzan Yell” made famous by the actor I grew to know and love, Johnny Weissmuller. “Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!” That's when my brain went into overdrive.

Later that day, I learned of the “Dum Dum” Convention for Burroughs fanatics, which was being held at a nearby hotel. I never knew of this society or the passion these collectors have. I guess they have the same kind of passion as that of First Day cover collectors. I found that if you like to do it, there is probably a club for it. After I arrived at the hotel convention, I once again heard the “Tarzan Yell” being played over the loudspeakers. The making of my cover took a whole new turn. I knew I had to somehow capture that sound and put it into my Tarzan cover.

While researching how to create that sound in my cover, I investigated sound greeting cards that I had received over the years. I studied the sound mechanism and how it worked. I went on the Internet to find small sound modules. I did not want anything bulky, which I felt would detract from the quality of my cover. After finding a vendor, I downloaded the yell and emailed it to him. He placed the sound bite in the module and the rest is history. You know, you can do almost anything with the services on the Internet.

Both covers are illustrated here. The cover with the “Tarzan Yell” has the darker green color. The other cover contains two inserts with the information of all the Tarzans and a complete list of Burroughs' works.

The cost for producing my covers was more than many cachetmakers would be willing to incur. But I wanted to fulfill my vision. If you do obtain one of my Tarzan covers, simply follow the instructions I've included inside the cover

