

## **KALVAN: THE GENESIS**

By John F. Carr

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H. Beam Piper was a gun and sword collector, a black powder enthusiast and a lifelong hunter, who admittedly felt he belonged in the Sixteenth Century era of swords and flintlock pistols, rather than the American mid-century world of thermo-nuclear brinkmanship. Through the pages of “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” Beam was able to *travel* to Fourth Level, Aryan Transpacific, Styphon’s House Subsector and create the world he wanted to live in—Kalvan’s Time-Line.

The Lord Kalvan stories (beyond their own merit as great yarns) form a fascinating link between H. Beam Piper’s two major series, the Terro-Human Future History and the Paratime series. Most of Beam’s early stories (1948 to 1952) are closely related although not always in the same science fictional history. Other than the Paratime stories, his early stories (late 1940’s to 1952) were written in the ‘indefinite,’ or near, future. However, after the publication of his short novel, “The Uller Uprising,” in 1952, the majority of his stories took place in either his Terro-Human Future History (Piper’s History of the Future) or the Paratime series, his story of a parallel traveling race who lived parasitically

off all the other time-lines, featuring Verkan Vall and the Paratime Police.

In 1957, when the Russians' launched Sputnik, Beam was embarrassed by how he had failed in his work to envision the opening of the space age. He told Diane Coleman that he resolved from that point on to write only stories taking place in the far future. A few of his earlier unpublished stories, like *The Answer*, continued to appear after 1958, but for the most part his remaining Terro-Human Future History stories took place hundreds or even thousands of years in the future.

Piper wrote only five Paratime stories, and none after 1954 (*Time Crime* was published *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1955) until *Gunpowder God*. Some Piper researchers have speculated that he 'discarded' the series, but in his diaries he writes about a possible idea for a Paratime story in the late 1950's, although no additional Paratime stories were ever written until the first Kalvan story in 1964.

In retrospect, considering the state of Piper's finances and the difficulties he had in selling his work, it was probably a mistake for him not to capitalize on the Paratime Series, which was popular both with *Astounding Science Fiction* editor, John W. Campbell, and his magazine readership. Piper, however, was a rugged individualist and never took the easier path!

Styphon's House theocracy, interestingly enough, originated as the antagonist of the story, *When in the Course...* The story is set in H. Beam Piper's Terro-Human Future History, making it the only Piper story to have been cast in both his future history and Paratime series.

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Due to H. Beam Piper's suicide and the confusion afterwards regarding who owned

the rights to his literary estate, Piper's novels and short stories fell out-of-print, after his final novel, "Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen," was published in 1965 by Ace Books. It didn't help that Piper's straightforward story writing-style and traditional narrative structure went out of fashion during most of the Nineteen Sixties and early Seventies, when the "New Wave" of Science Fiction was at its peak.

Piper's novels and short stories languished out-of-print for nearly twenty years and the Piper books, "Little Fuzzy," "Space Viking" and "Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen" were only available at collector's bookstores at "rare" book prices. This would change in the early 1980's as interest in the science fiction backlist and Piper in particular began to build. Jerry Pournelle, Bill Tuning, Marty Massoglia and Frank Gasperik were among a number of prominent writers and fans who were talking up Piper at science fiction conventions and encouraging publishers to look into purchasing the Piper estate with the purpose of publishing his long out-of-print novels and short stories.

In the early 1980's, Jim Bean, Editor-and-Chief of *Galaxy SF Magazine*, left the magazine for the position of Vice-President of Ace Books under Tom Doherty. Jim had worked closely with Jerry Pournelle, who was the science columnist at *Galaxy*, and thanks to Pournelle was familiar with H. Beam Piper's literary legacy. After Jim left *Galaxy*, one of his first acts as the new Vice President of Ace Books was to locate and purchase the literary estate of the late H. Beam Piper.

What Jim purchased as Piper's 'literary estate' was a disorganized mess containing a few old science fiction pulp magazines, Ace paperbacks and a few surviving manuscripts...

Tragically, the majority of Beam's unpublished works were destroyed either in

earlier ashcan fires, or in Beam's Williamsport apartment fireplace before his death.

Piper was always very concerned with his literary legacy, even before his first story was published. He was also a very private individual who frequently changed and re-wrote his sparse biography. For example, telling friends that his ex-wife, Elizabeth Hurst, only married him for an expensive French vacation, when in fact he was deeply in love with Betty and even moved to France for several months to live there with her. They only broke up because Beam was unable to live in Europe and she was not going to give up her job working with the international student organization.

As a boy, John McGuire, Jr. recounted how he used to watch in fascination as Beam and his father, the late John J. McGuire, would get drunk and burn rejected manuscripts. "They would dance like wild Indians, around the barrel-sized ashcan in the backyard, after their stories had made one too many rounds of the New York based science fiction magazines."

In a phone conversation, Mike Knerr told me that when he went to clean up Beam's apartment, the fireplace was full of ashes and partially burned paper. He used to visit Beam a lot before his marriage and they both would discuss works in progress. A number of Piper's manuscripts, that he personally was aware of, including his historical novel "Only the Arquebus" and the *lost* manuscript of "Fuzzies and Other People," never turned up when he sorted through Beam's personal effects.

In the decade following Beam's death, Mike Knerr speculates, in his unpublished manuscript "PIPER," that the original trunk of manuscripts that he presented to the "estate" lawyer were probably thrown out. No lawyer, unless a 'close' friend of the deceased, will store "worthless" items for a long period of time.

Beam's ex-wife's only comment, when given the news of Beam's death via the telephone, was "Let the guns bury him!" She had no interest in his literary estate.

Charles Piper, a cousin, was Beam's closest living relative and he did keep in sporadic contact with Beam as evidenced in the diaries; in fact, he's the only relative mentioned after the death of Beam's mother. Charles Piper was also the only member of the family who attended Beam's funeral.

However, there's no evidence that Charles or any other member of the family made any attempt to preserve Beam's literary legacy. During the decades following his death, almost all of Piper's unpublished short stories and novels (a large number of which are mentioned in his diaries and letters to his best friend, Ferd Coleman) were lost or destroyed forever.

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In the early 1980's, I was working with Jerry Pournelle as his Editorial Associate at his home in Studio City. At that time, I was doing a lot of Piper data mining and research for the "Space Viking" sequel, which Jerry and I were co-authoring, so I was very familiar with Piper's published body of work. Once I started my research, I quickly realized that many of the Piper stories, other than the Paratime stories, were linked as part of his Terro-Human Future History.

This was back in 1979 (pre-Internet era) when finding back issues of obscure science fiction pulps was a time consuming chore. Luckily for me, the Hollywood Collector's Book Store had a large collection of pulps and I was able to locate and purchase all the Piper magazine stories, except Genesis.

Once Jim Baen had purchased the "rights" to the Piper estate, he quickly learned that

most of Piper's magazine short stories and novellas were missing from the "estate."

When Jim Baen asked Jerry if he knew anyone who had copies of Piper's published works, Jerry informed him that *I* had copies of all of Piper's published works including rarities such as *Dearest (Weird Tales)* and *Flight From Tomorrow (Future Science Fiction?)*. Jim called me and I provided him with photocopies of Piper's magazine stories.

In the course of going over the surviving manuscripts, Jim Baen discovered two unpublished H. Piper works "When in the Course..." and the short novel, "Full Cycle." Of course, at the time I knew nothing about these unpublished stories.

To set the scene: Jerry was working in his newly constructed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office and Great Hall, which was filled with beautiful bookshelves constructed by a pair of Hollywood set designers to mimic the library in the movie, *My Fair Lady*. Jerry's office, computer workroom and Great Hall occupied over 2000 feet of the upstairs addition. I sat at a big desk at the bottom of the stairs in Jerry's former office, lined with bookshelves filled to the bursting with SF books and magazines, including most of the issues of *Astounding/Analog Science Fiction* from the early 1940's to the present.

To this day I can remember Jerry bounding down the wide stairway with a package of manuscripts. "John," he boomed, "You will not believe what just came in from Baen—two unpublished Piper manuscripts! I want you to read them and give me your opinion on whether or not they're publishable."

My pulse raced—I would be one of the first editors since the early 1960's to read unpublished H. Beam Piper stories!

I quickly read the shorter of the two, *When in the Course...*, which I promptly identified as taking place in Piper's Hostigos. I was startled to discover this story was also the origin of the Kalvan stories—only without Kalvan! Several of the early Hostigos scenes that take place in *When in the Course...* are almost identical to those which turn up later in *Gunpowder God*, the first Kalvan novelette, even down to the character names such as Rylla, Ptosphes, Harmakros and Chartiphon.

It wasn't until a few pages later that I realized this story was set in Piper's *Terro-Human Future History* with a different hero, Roger Barron, a member of an interstellar exploration outfit, *Stellar Explorations*. The plot of *When in the Course...* concerns an interstellar discovery ship that's been searching for a habitable planet and is about at the end of their string of luck. They arrive only to find another sentient humanoid race. To be able to colonize the planet, they have to come to some accommodation with the natives and pick the outlying small principedom of Hostigos as their contact point. *When in the Course...* covers a lot more ground than the three Kalvan novellas, and it is not without serious flaws.

On the other hand, "Full Cycle" was a disappointing parable of the Cold War with aliens standing in for the US and Russia. It was definitely a work of the early 1950's (there is some evidence that this was written as a second Twayne Triplet, but never published when that press folded); my recommendation was that it not be published. I was very disappointed when Ace Books released it anyway.

*When in the Course...* is an intriguing piece of work for Piper and Kalvan fans, since several of the early Hostigos scenes that take place in this story are almost identical to those in which later turn up in *Gunpowder God*, the first Kalvan novelette, even down to

character names and setting of Hos-Hostigos. The opening war council scene in Hostigos was almost lifted verbatim from *When in the Course...* and put into *Gunpowder God*.

The primary conflict of both stories is the small principedom of Hostigos versus the Goliath of Styphon's House which controls the production of gunpowder, or "fireseed" as they call it. Only on Freya the weather is better and on this "smaller continent" there are only three Kingdoms (not five), Hos-Harphax, Hos-Rathon and Hos-Bleth.

The biggest difference in regards to the plot between the two stories is that in *When in the Course...* the protagonist, Roger Barron, brings the full might of a Federation space ship against the pike and shot armies of Styphon. This quickly finishes off the conflict between Hostigos and Styphon's House, although there is some *business* about the ship being low on ammunition just to keep the story moving. Piper realizes the story is lagging about midway through *When in the Course...* and attempts to create dramatic tension out of the question of whether Federation non-interference rules make helping the Freyan's illegal.

In contrast to "Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen," Styphon's House in *When in the Course...* turns out to be a paper tiger and the fireseed secret, once disseminated throughout the continent, results in a complete rejection of this heinous religious theocracy. Despite the pat ending, there are some excellent characters and dramatic scenes; *When in the Course...* is a flawed but, still, above average (for the time) science fiction story.

However, *When in the Course...* proved un-salable for several good reasons. The Freyan natives turn out to be not only humanoid, but also inter-fertile with humans. (This is what the title refers to: "when, in the course of human events, a couple of humans of

different sexes get married—”) Parallel evolution was not an unusual concept in the 1930’s and 1940’s, but highly suspect by late 1950’s and early 1960’s. Piper often used the Martian origin of humanity idea in both the Paratime stories and the Terro-Human Federation series, but there’s no mention of the Ancient Martians in *When in the Course...* or even alien seed ships, another popular convention for explaining parallel evolution. Near the end of the story, Beam does offer an explanation of convergent evolution, but it’s hardly convincing—even to his own characters!

I was able to include it among the stories in “Federation”—the first collection of H. Beam Piper stories I edited for Ace Books. Despite the story’s flaws, it was quite a coup to be able to publish a “new” Piper short story, made even more so by the fact that it is the *origin* story of the Kalvan stories.

The major plot problem is that the story conflict is minimized; the villain (Styphon’s House) remains mostly faceless and is quickly neutralized, leaving the plot to wrap up both too neatly and too quickly. The idea behind Styphon’s House, the sinister theocracy of both *When in the Course...* and “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen,” is a very good one: Styphon’s House are the only ones who know the formula for gunpowder, which they call the Fireseed Mystery. The Temple’s fireseed monopoly puts them in the empire business, if you want to defeat your enemies, do as we say or we’ll give your enemies fireseed and cut you off. “If you don’t like that, put it in your pipe and smoke it!”

The Styphon’s House cast of characters would have been right at home in Renaissance Italy for all the high church politics and dirty dealings—Machiavelli would have recognized this lot!

In “PIPER,” Mike Knerr mentions an incident which he believes may have been the

genesis of Styphon's House: "When he (Piper) taught me about black powder, I started reading about it and told him that I'd found that when it was moistened into cakes (in the old days) they used urine. According to the book, the urine of a wine drinker was good, but that of a priest was considered best. 'Yes,' Beam retorted, laughing, 'and I'll bet they made a tidy profit from it!'"

Piper often re-used the better elements of his unsold stories and in this case he took out the Hostigos of When in the Course... transplanting it into the Paratime series as a small principedom in the Great Kingdom of Hos-Harphax on Forth Level, Europo-American, Aryan-Transpacific.

As Campbell noted, the major problems with When in the Course are its meandering plotline, numerous subplots that for the most part go nowhere and a flat resolution that solves the problem in far too simple a manner, robbing the reader of satisfaction. Yet, there are some good characters: Rylla, Ptosphes and Harmakros make their first appearance and the gunpowder theocracy of Styphon's House is introduced. It's actually fortuitous that *Fantastic Universe*, *Amazing Stories* or some other sixties' salvage market didn't pick up the story, preventing Beam from reinventing it as Gunpowder God—the first of the Lord Kalvan novelettes.

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The first mention of When in the Course... in Beam's day book or diary is early in December of 1959. In "PIPER," Mike Knerr's unpublished biography of H. Beam Piper, he recounts:

"Beam was having problems with his latest science fiction yarn, When in the

Course... and was busy re-writing and reformulating the plot. Meanwhile, ‘the ceiling started to leak and continued throughout the evening.’ Beam was plagued with periodic losses of heat from the landlord’s furnace, inconsiderate pigeons, the inability to get a story planned the way he wanted it—and now water dripping into the gunroom.”

As usual Beam’s agent, Kenneth White, sent his new story to *Analog Science Fiction* (formerly *Astounding Science Fiction*), at that time the field’s highest paying short story market. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Beam writes: ‘letter from Ken White—Campbell has bounced When in the Course..., and Dell is not going to publish “Little Fuzzy (i.e., the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fuzzy sequel jfc).” This is the worst of all.’”

Here is the text of John W. Campbell’s’ rejection letter for When in the Course... sent to Kenneth White on January 20, 1960:

*Dear Mr. White:*

*Piper has one, long-standing characteristic in his writing that causes trouble; he personalizes, identifies, all his characters equally. There are too many spear-carriers being treated as stars, which make it hard for the reader to get the hang of the story. Real life may, indeed, be this way; but art is not the reproduction of life—that’s photography of the snapshot variety—instead it’s an abstraction from and clarification of life.*

*That’s one fault here. The second fault present is that the reader winds up with a vague feeling that nothing much happened. Agreed freely and fully that it’s not true; a*

lot did happen. But the feeling can be there.

*The problem is made as diffuse as the cast of characters. (That, too, is true of life...but makes for ineffective art.)*

*If he had made *The Problem* the *House of Styphon*, then, at a particular period, under particular circumstances, the reader would sigh, feel “Ah! Now they’ve licked the problem,” and be able to rest content.*

*As is...where’s the climax in this story?*

*Regards,*

*John W. Campbell, Jr.*

Mike Knerr recounts: “A letter from Ken on the 16th of March, 1960 added Putnam to the ‘list of publishers who don’t want “Little Fuzzy.”’ On the 19th: ‘Horace Gold has bounced *When in the Course...* as expected, with characteristic Goldian comments.’ Ken White would continue to make the rounds of the SF magazine markets, ever smaller as one pulp after another disappeared, with *When in the Course...* but it would fail to find a home during Piper’s lifetime. Fortunately, for posterity, it did turn up among the ‘few’ surviving manuscripts Ace Books uncovered when they took possession of Piper’s literary estate.”

“Piper went back to being frustrated with the way the story (*Pest Among Men*) was going, and by the (February) 8th had decided to take a break from it and write an article on the Battle of Cerignola. Unless he had planned to sell the article overseas, he would have done better to write about Appomattox or Gettysburg. A European battle fought in the Sixteenth Century wouldn’t seem to draw much of an American audience—yet he

launched into it... ‘Up town to bank—am down to \$20.00 now, worst ever—and got something for dinner.’

“It took him about a week to write the article; it’s unfortunate there was no real market for it. Writing and selling a non-fiction piece very few months would have solved most of Beam’s financial problems.

“He mailed out the article, *The Queen Comes Into Her Own*, on February 15th, and, it too, fell victim to editorial flack. He went back to working *Pest Among Men* and began considering the sale of some of his gun collection.

“Finally, on his birthday... ‘The whole story (*Pest Among Men*) fell to pieces on me, and I spent most of the day among the wreckage, wondering how the hell I was ever going to get it put together again.’”

By the end of 1960 Piper added *When in the Course...* to his rather large trunk of unsold short stories and novels and there is no further mention of *When in the Course...* until 1964.

After a struggle with dire poverty throughout most of 1963, Beam entered a dry period as far as the generation of new stories. Part of this loss of creativity may be a result of his disappointment with the loss of his Avon editor, who had bought the first two *Fuzzy* novels. It’s also true at this time his health was suffering, both from his recent back injury as well as chronic knee and stomach problems. On top of that, Beam was tormented by insomnia and general restlessness, due in large part to his failure to earn a livable wage through his writing and the long-term effects of intermittent starvation.

Another of Beam’s endless sources of frustration was coming up with ‘new’ story

ideas and plots that were worth writing. He often put as much work into a discarded short story as some writers put into an entire finished novel. It didn't help his financial or mental state that Beam constantly re-wrote his stories, even projects that should have been abandoned years before.

So it comes as no surprise that Piper often re-used the better elements of his unsold stories. Occasionally, it paid off. In this case he took out the Hostigos of *When in the Course...* and recast it into the Paratime series as a small principedom in the Great Kingdom of Hos-Harphax on Forth Level, Europo-American, Aryan-Transpacific, as part of his Paratime Series, starring Verkan Vall, a series he had abandoned after "Time Crime" (1955 *Astounding Science Fiction*).

Despite his interest in 16th Century warfare and his historical novel, there was no further mention of *When in the Course...* in Beam's diaries until 1964. At the beginning of the year, Beam was still hard at work on "Fuzzies and Other People" (the third Fuzzy novel begun in 1963) and by January 10th, 1964 was up to page 135. The book was finally on track and Beam finished it and mailed it off to his agent on February 3rd, 1964. Beam agonized over the plots and re-wrote stories to the point of distraction, but when he smelled the finish line he was like Seabiscuit.

It had been a while since Piper's last sale and hadn't heard anything from Avon regarding the second Fuzzy novel. As Mike Knerr tells it, Beam was still hopeful that he could sell the third Fuzzy novel:

"Fuzzies and Other People" was done and making its way to Avon so this insolvency appeared to be business as normal. Except, he needed cash desperately; Betty (his ex-wife jfc) was coming to New York on February 13th.

On the next day he received a letter from Betty; she would be returning to France from California, on Sunday, February 16th. Beam wrote, ‘and I will go to New York to see her. Ken enthusiastic about “Fuzzies and Other People.” Home 1700, read for awhile, worked on future history—I hope that blighter (a fan for whom he wrote a short piece on his future history) in Birmingham is duly appreciative...’

Beam was in New York at Idlewild Airport, February 16th, ‘Betty got in 1715, right on schedule—the years show on her a bit. We had a few drinks, Daiquiris, and a delightful chat until her plane for France got in.’ He stayed in town for a while, then took a return bus to Williamsport.

‘The divorce, of course, went through, but Beam never seemed to give up hope. Although he was apt to make caustic remarks about their relationship, or to fluff off the whole thing light to anyone who might ask, inside he was neither bitter nor flippant about what had happened. His bus left New York at 12:30 AM, but he couldn’t sleep en route. ‘Awake all night, couldn’t get to sleep at all. Arrived in Williamsport 0730, and home to bed immediately.’

In mid-February, Mike Knerr tells us in “PIPER:” ‘Now he had a new project, ‘Worked in morning planning a new story, tentative title, Gunpowder God—Paratime story about theocracy with the corner on secret of making gunpowder.’ In part, the new story was based on events and setting of *When in the Course...*, the 1959 novella he never could sell. ‘Will have to write this in three parts, 20-25,000 words apiece, since *Analog* is loaded with serials for the next three years.’ He began with the usual doodling and planning, but mentioned that his morale was not very high.

‘Back home Beam was having trouble concentrating. ‘Wasted the rest of the day

doing nothing at all—reading, working double-croctics and otherwise avoiding work.’

By the first week of March he was working on three drafts of *Gunpowder God*, the first-draft, the second first draft and the first final draft. On the 6th, he wrote, ‘A letter from Betty and one from Peter Weston in England thanking me for the future history letter. Started a letter to Betty; it bogged down and I gave it up.’

“By March 13th, he was making progress, but having problems ‘mostly because I’m getting too many things in for proper length of story.’”

While things were improving on the writing side, they were not going so well on the financial end. A call to Ken White on the 18th only gave him more bad news—Avon—now under a new regime—had decided not to accept “Fuzzies and Other People.” Not a surprise. The first thing the new editor had done was put the kibosh on “Fuzzy Sapiens,” giving it the ugliest, murkiest black/purple cover in paperback history—as if daring the fans to buy it. To add insult to injury—and guarantee that fans couldn’t find it—they changed the title from “Fuzzy Sapiens” to “The Other Human Race”!

It’s not unusual in New York when a new editor comes into town that he or she will shoot down the book prospects of his or her predecessor—after all, if they do sell well, it only vindicates the departed editor. In the industry, these books are referred to as orphans. If the new editor, puts up obstacles—read “no publicity,” few review copies, poor artwork—on his or her predecessor’s works; well, of course, then they were bombs to begin with. But woe to the poor writer who gets caught in the crossfire, as Beam did with the Fuzzy sequels...

Avon never had much of a science fiction line, but a Hugo Nomination for “Little Fuzzy” was big news and they should have made a killing on the sequel. But in New

York publishing; it's not *always* about the money. Ego is too often the biggest coin of the realm. Writers are as indispensable as cabs, there's always another one around the next corner...

Worse, for Beam, was the fact that Avon didn't want the third Fuzzy novel which cast a pale over the book—it was a series orphan since the parent publisher didn't want—or reading between the lines—couldn't sell. Or at least, that's how a competing editor would see it. Few editors have the story savvy and understanding of their readers as John W. Campbell demonstrated; most editors only buy what's already selling, not what might sell. The first whiff of failure sends them scurrying like rats off a ship...

Maybe if he could have gotten the publication rights to the Fuzzy books reverted back from Avon, Beam could have sold the whole Fuzzy shebang to Don Wolheim over at Ace; Wolheim, a long-time fan, who knew the value of a good book, especially a good series. But, while Avon no longer wanted the Fuzzy books; the last thing they'd do was revert them; after all, what if another house was able to sell the hell out of them? That would not look good to the parent company and said editor might shortly find himself in the unemployment line.

“‘Little Fuzzy’ is now with Ace,’ Ken White wrote, ‘But Satan only knows whether or when.’ By March 30th, Beam was down to \$5.50 in his bank account and was working toward the finish of *Gunpowder God*, the first Kalvan novelette, for *Analog*. John Campbell's magazine was the top paying market among the SF magazines and Beam wrote the sort of stories John loved. Beam finally finished *Gunpowder God* and mailed it off to Ken White on April 2nd, and went right to work on *Kalvan Kingmaker*, the next novelette in the series.

Ken White wrote the following submission letter to John W. Campbell:

*Dear Mr. Campbell:*

*Here's a new novelette by H. Beam Piper, Gunpowder God, we hope you're going to like. It's one of his Paratime stories and he plans two more of similar length to follow it.*

*Cordially*

*Ken White*

Once Piper had the plot of a story down, he was a hard worker. Before his back injury, from a slip and fall on the sidewalks in Williamsport during one of his walks, Beam often wrote until early morning, probably a holdover from his years with the Pennsylvania Railroad when Piper worked the graveyard shift. Almost sixty years old, Beam was no longer able to put in 14 to 16 hour stints at the typewriter and this was another reminder of old age and the increasing frailty of his body.

Mike Knerr tells us: "A few days later he withdrew the last two dollars in his bank account; he was having troubles again keeping his mind on writing. He sold a couple of pistols and tried to finish Kalvan Kingmaker (original title for Down Styphon! jfc). On April 20th Beam wrote, 'Worked all morning on first draft for Kalvan Kingmaker. Letter from Ken White—tough shit all around—Ace, as well as Avon, has bounced 'Fuzzies and Other People,' and John Campbell wants a re-write done on Gunpowder God.'

*Dear Ken:*

*We got troubles!*

*This is a lovely yarn; unlike many of Beam's Paratime series, he doesn't have too many individual characters named and described, until the reader tends to go slightly nuts trying to keep track of 'em.*

*But he does have too many words for us right now.*

*The situation is that we've got novels on hand and already scheduled through August 1965. Now when I run a novel installment, that takes about 25,000 words of the magazine; I can't run both a 25,000 word novel installment and a 25,000 word novelette; it wouldn't leave me enough room for the rest of the things I have to get in.*

*About 18,500 or so is the top length I can manage until sometime late in 1965.*

*He has a pair of characters in here who really aren't functional—the "blind" minstrel and the "stupid boy"; some wordage could be saved there—and Beam is still somewhat over par for the course on characters, even so.*

*Readers have objected to Beam's tendency to throw in detailed characterizations of dozens of individuals; the reader expects characterized personnel in a story to be important actors. Beam just enjoys describing personalities—which is fine, but gets readers lost.*

*If Beam can cut this to 18,500, I'll give him the full 4 cents bonus rate on acceptance.*

*Regards*

*John W. Campbell*

Beam re-wrote it and sent it off in five days. Mike Knerr brought him a copy of his latest Ace paperback version of “Cosmic Computer”—only Ace had re-titled it “Junkyard Planet.” Beam hadn’t known it was out, nor was he pleased by the title change.

Beam was back to work and having the usual troubles with Kalvan Kingmaker: “Worked all day on final draft, another re-do; this is getting tiresome, and, looking it over, I think it’s going to have to be re-done again. Wasn’t out at all, at it all day and typed 22 pages.”

On May 19th, he received a letter from John W. Campbell and a check for \$684.00, the advance for *Gunpowder God*, less Ken’s commission. Piper wrote: “Letter from JWC accompanied check—he’s enthusiastic about more stories of same sort. Will provide.”

*Dear Mr. Piper:*

*Your yarn, as shortened, is fine; check on its way.*

*Your suggestion for further yarns along the path you’ve sketched out is also fine.*

*I’m definitely looking for stories with a bit more guts in them than the stuff that’s standard American literature these days. *The Apotheosis of the Common Jerk, or the Life of the Common Suburbanite, and his trails, tribulations, and insignificant temptations and naughtiness acutely disinterests me. Why authors think the frustrations and**

*eroticisms of insignificant suburbanites is the most important material possible for stories, I don't know.*

*One thing I am very sure of; no story that's lived for more than a couple of centuries had a central character so vapidly incompetent as the standard "hero" of the standard modern American novel.*

*Your Aryan-Transpacific paratime line allows some grand yarns, with men who are damn well MEN, and women who aren't afraid to be different from men, and like it that way. It's a world where insurance hasn't been invented, and every individual is acutely and personally responsible for his own acts and behavior—which, as Bob Heinlein pointed out in "Beyond This Horizon" breeds a race having good manners, clear thinking, and fast reflexes!*

*There's very little neurosis in such a culture. The neurotic gets himself killed off too quick to pass on his problem!*

*Your idea of a series in which the reader can trace the action on the maps of here-and-now is fun, too. But I suggest that Kalvan can, every now and then, come a slight cropper by trying to do just that...and forgetting that the world he's in was made by a different set of probabilities. Like a growing tree that shoved a boulder that deflected a stream that caused what Kalvan knew as a major obstacle to a cavalry charge to be half a mile from where he was counting on it.*

*Incidentally, the House of Styphon doesn't appear to have discovered the possibilities of blasting powder. (Their motivations being what they were, they wouldn't. That's economically important, but doesn't appear at first glance to have the political impact Styphon's fireseed-as-war-material has.)*

*I have a hunch Kalvan could raise merry old hell with the opposition by the simple technique of using blasting powder. The stuff is very annoying to defenders of castles, armies trying to cross bridges, or attack through a narrow pass.*

*Also, nitroglycerin is astonishingly easy to make, and a small bottle of the stuff makes a wonderful boobytrap for the uninitiated. You just leave a flask of it on the table; he's certain to pick it up to see what-the-hell—and all he has to do is shake it a little, set it down hard, or taste it. The first two eliminate him and the surroundings; the last eliminate him with a heart attack. A simple bottle of nitroglycerin is an elegantly simple booby trap; it's practically certain that it will be a long time before anyone reports to the enemy just what the boobytrap is!*

*And nitroglycerin is so much easier to make than good powder. Literally, it makes itself in just the right proportions.*

*And double-base smokeless powder is reasonably easy too; nitroglycerin and nitrocellulose.*

*Of course, high speed information-handling is a terrific military weapon, too. And you need neither vacuum tube nor transistor technology for radio-telegraphy.*

*...But most particularly...have fun! The general attitude of the conquerors of that cultural type was rather largely determined by an air of practical jokes, on a large scale, with murder, mayhem, and conquest as a sort of by-product.*

*They had fun!*

*Regards,*

*John W. Campbell*

The letter from John W. Campbell was a godsend and Beam desperately needed the \$684.00 advance for Gunpowder God.

Meanwhile, Kalvan Kingmaker was growing bigger than anticipated and Beam decided to cut it into two stories to fill Campbell's 18,000 words requirement. Down Styphon! became the second story of the three and he worked hard at both until the wee hours. "A little bat got in somehow; found him snoozing, upside down, at the top of the window frame in hall. With hall light on, he still thought it was still daylight—still there when I went to bed at 0130..." Beam wrote. Mike Knerr comments, "The bat left during the night; anyone else would have clobbered it, but if it would have hung around Piper would have fed it."

Beam finished Down Styphon! on June 1st, 1964 and went right to work on the third story, Kalvan Kingmaker. He was hoping for a check, when instead he got a letter from Ken White: "Campbell wants re-write on Down Styphon, long letter from Campbell enclosed. Hope this doesn't get to be a regular thing. Started re-writing; out 1900 to bank, now only have \$8.00 in account."

On June 14th, 1964, Beam wrote to Charlie and Marcia Brown:

*Haven't seen a copy of what they call "The Other Human Race," which I suppose is "Fuzzy Sapiens." Thank you for letting me know. I don't suppose they've bothered to tell Ken White, either. I question if he'll be any more amused about this than I am.*

*I'm glad to hear that the paperback "Junkyard Planet" ("The Cosmic Computer," for Christ's sake!) is selling well. I will probably be reaping the harvest in six months or so; they got the rights on it from Putnam's, and Putnam's will pay me. A paperback "Uller Uprising" I have been thinking about for some time; some day something will get done on it.*

*Paratime stories to date:*

<i>Police Operation</i>	<i>Astounding, July 1948</i>
<i>Last Enemy</i>	<i>Astounding, August 1960</i>
<i>Temple Trouble</i>	<i>Astounding, April 1951</i>
<i>Time Crime</i>	<i>Astounding, February and March 1955</i>

*Campbell has just bought another Paratime story, Gunpowder God, and since then I have finished another which is still unreported, and am working on a third at present.*

*I haven't heard any more from the movie ("Little Fuzzy") than Jim Blish has from his. Do we have an extradition treaty with Jamaica and the Bahamas? If not, that could be just the reason.*

*Best wishes, and try to get in touch with you-all the next time I get to NY.*

*Beam*

A day later, on June 15, 1964, Piper heard from John Campbell regarding the

revisions he wanted to Down Styphon!:

*Dear Beam:*

*I'm just back from Scotland, where I've been having considerable fun learning the background of Scots history and mine own people. There was an ancestor of mine who, around 1750 or so, was residing with his parents in New Jersey, when an Indian raid of the town practically wiped it out. He saw his mother and father killed and scalped, and he was captured and carried off by the Indians.*

*Poor Indians! They didn't know Scots' history. They'd never heard of the Massacre of Glen Coe. They didn't know why it was that when a Scots clan decided to wipe out a rival clan, they were careful to kill all the children, too.*

*Anyhow, my seven-year-old ancestor that night killed three of the Indian braves, and escaped. He devoted the next eighty years of his life to reducing the Indian population, achieving a personal score of confirmed killed-in-individual-encounters of 189 Indians.*

*Having learned something of Scots history, I can readily understand why the poor Indians didn't have a chance. The Indians were gentle flowers, nurtured in a warm, and sunkissed land, compared with the bloody-minded, ferocious old bastitches of the Highlands!*

*...T'anyhow—you might have fun with a people who had that sort of highly disciplined, and absolutely unswervable intransigence in your Paratime stories. If they'd ever settled their differences at home, agreed on a True Philosophy, and set out to Enlighten the heathen in the rest of the world...God help the neighbors!*

*Down Styphon! come back for some minor revisions.*

*What you've done here is almost exactly parallel to the sort of thing we used to do in 1930-style science fiction, but in a different line. My early stories, for instance, were loaded with 500 words of action, 2,000 words of hypothetical technology, 500 words of action, 1,000 words of science, 500 words of action, 2,000 words of hypothesis... et cetera.*

*You've gotten somewhat of a similar effect with military technology that I was getting with physics technology.*

*The general staff scene (P. 16 et seq.) for instance put over the information—but strictly as a *Lecture on Military Tactical Problems* by H. Beam Piper.*

*Vide lectures on physics by John W. Campbell, Jr., in *Solarite, Amazing Stories*, circa 1931.*

*An alternative approach would be a scene where Kalvan is trying to get a Hostigos artisan to make one of the weapons he wants, with Chartiphon along, and not being too sharp on catching the need for the new idea.*

*I know it's hard to see that staff meeting is “a dry lecture by the author” when you know how important the data is to the story. Yeah...you do. But does the reader who wants a good old-fashioned swashbuckler? No, he does not. He resents your “stopping the story to spout hypothetical history.”*

*Can something be done about this—and a couple of similar scenes—in this yarn?*

*On, another item for another story. During WWII, the Allies caused the death by starvation of several million Bengali. They needed airfields, military bases, barracks and roads built, and hired the Bengali men as laborers, paying high wages.*

*The result was that these Bengali's did not spend their time farming. They wound up with lots of money, and no food for love or money.*

*A really vicious little tactic to employ deliberately against a subsistence-level economy, isn't it? You get your money back, of course, after you conquer the famine-decimated enemy country. And the roads you've had them build greatly ease your conquest...and bring in the food they're (literally!) dying to buy at inflated prices.*

*Not all practical and workable tactics are in the history books as such!*

*Regards*

*John W. Campbell*

On the 21st of June, Beam wrote, "Worked all morning and afternoon on revision, got 10 pages done, and then found that most of it will have to be scrapped—which means not only loss of time and effort, but of typewriter paper, in short supply as money at present. It was insufferably hot—wonder what it would be like to fight in armor on a day like this." Still, with all his re-writing, Beam managed to get the Down Styphon! re-write into the mail to Ken White by the June 26th, 1964. Included was the following letter to John Campbell:

*Dear John:*

*You must have had a lot of fun in Scotland. I've never been there, and I should, for*

*the ethnological cocktail which is H. Beam Piper contains a very healthy-sized slug of Scotch. But the farthest north I've ever been was Coventry. If I can make it to the '65 World Convention in London, I'll find or make time for a trip to the Highlands.*

*Down Styphon! It is done, and off to Ken White; you should be getting it along with this. I decided to keep the General Staff meeting, it was the best way I could get all the important Hostigi characters together and re-introduced in a bunch and state the situation Kalvan is facing, and that had to be done. I hope, however, that you'll like it. I got rid of most of the indigestible chunks of tactics, such as the proper employment of cavalry, and why cavalry are better off without lances and musketoons, the precise difference, including weight and caliber, between an arquebus and a caviler, and how many of the militia still had crossbows.*

*I did have to show that Hostigos was fighting against heavy odds, and I did have to bear down on the artillery, because that was Kalvan's ace-in-the-hole. It is surprising how much difference the invention of trunnions made in artillery. Cannon were used in Europe at least as early as 1327, but they weren't mounted with trunnions until about 1490 (+ or - five or ten years), by the French. Cannon bedded into huge timber stocks and hauled on four-wheel carts seem to be the only kind Machiavelli knew about, which accounts for the low opinion of artillery he expressed in *The Prince*, *The Discourses*, and *The Art of War*. One of these simple little things, like the stirrup, or the horse-collar, or the socket bayonet, that nobody but a genius would think of, but it was what really put field artillery in business. The guns with which Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, pounded the Spaniards out of a good prepared position at Ravenna, 1512, were so mounted.*

*The idea of terrain alteration because of diversion of a stream I am saving for a late story, when Kalvan is fighting off a general crusade raised against him by Styphon's House. Before he became interested in medieval and XVI and XVII Century warfare, Calvin Morrison was interested in the Civil War, and knew almost as much about Gettysburg as Robert E. Lee. When they had the Centennial battle re-enactment, his superiors at the State Police, knowing of this, assigned him to the detail on duty there. So he thinks he knows all about the ground around Gettysburg, and arranges to fight his big battle there.*

*The only trouble is, that here-and-now, the beavers have gotten into that area, and in the past hundred or so years they've dammed up all the streams and turned all the best fighting ground into marshes. From a historical probability viewpoint, beavers are entirely random.*

*The Bengali story's a good one; I may use that, not for a Paratime story but for a Future History story, either Terran Federation or Galactic Empire, probably the latter. Instead of being a piece of deliberate villainy, it will be the stupidity of a lot of helping-handers and do-gooders like Count Erskyll in *A Slave is a Salve*. That kind of people are worse than villains; villains only commit crimes, and they commit blunders, which often do much more harm. We're turning a lot of them loose on the world now.*

*Machiavelli's comment on our Foreign Aid programme, by the way:*

*Amongst other indications by which the power of a republic may be recognized is the relationship in which they live with their neighbors; if these are tributary to her by way of securing her friendship and protection, then it is a sure sign that the republic is powerful. But if these neighboring states, though they may be more feeble than herself, draw money*

*from her, then it is a sure indication of great weakness on the part of the republic.*

*But, of course, Machiavelli was a dirty old so-and-so. He wasn't a Liberal. He was selfish! For one thing, he didn't believe that friends who could be bought were worth buying.*

*Best wishes,*

*H. Beam Piper*

Beam went straight to work on Kalvan Kingmaker and by pure serendipity found another \$10.00 in his bank account—"which means a lot, now." He was reduced to writing in longhand on legal pads to save typing paper. But there were other problems: "Second floor denizens had another screaming fight, a lot of it on the sidewalk in front of the house."

He continued working on Kalvan Kingmaker throughout June and into July, but it was slow going. "Worked on first draft all day," he wrote on July 15th, "using too many words to say the same thing too many times. Will have to get hold of this story and give it a good shaking." By the 27th, things were starting to jell with Kalvan Kingmaker: "All day on planning for the big battle scene, mostly trying to get the timing right. Tricky job, making everything fit."

On July 30th, "Working on down cutting and recasting what has already been done. Have to jettison a lot of nice bits—may be able to get them back in when I re-write for book-form. Still nothing from Ken White. Wrote him a letter, *par avion*, to find out why." Kalvan Kingmaker was coming down the backstretch. On August 1st, Beam

wrote: “Worked all morning, early PM, on planning—up to big battle; have to get my troop-strengths, movements and timing, order of battle; worked on this till mid-afternoon, then out for a walk up town, bought another small box of rice, cutting me down to .23 cents, plus a penny I found. Read in evening, to bed 2330.”

By August 4th, the Down Styphon! money had come in and Beam was hustling to get the new story out so that he could have some income coming in. “Fuzzies and Other People” was dead in the water and the Piper story inventory was almost as bare as his kitchen cabinets the week before. With John Campbell overbooked with novels and novellas, Beam couldn’t count on writing another novel, like “Space Viking,” to tide him over through the winter. His plan was to sell the three Kalvan novelettes to John and then sell the ensuing novel to Ace Books.

On August 13th, he wrote, “Past the battle, now, and still have oodles of scenes, action, to get in.” Beam was helping friends set up their exhibits at the Lycoming County Historical Society temporary museum. Mike Knerr writes: “His writing appears almost jaunty during these several days of working with friends at the museum, with no moaning at all about scrapping what he’d written. He was even working in the evening. His old friend Ted Ranck had been enlisted to help with the museum work, together with a Mr. and Mrs. Donald Carson, and there are happy notations in the diary about the men dropping by Beam’s place, after work, for a couple of drinks. The story, although parts had to be re-done, was coming along and Beam even found time to clean his own guns.”

There was another official looking letter from France on August 21st, while Beam was cleaning the 9mm Mauser pistol. “Suspect that this is *It* (official confirmation of his French divorce from Betty; he was right jfc). He went back to cleaning the Mauser and

working on Kalvan Kingmaker, which he was now calling Hos Hostigos.

Beam was writing at a good clip, 10 to 15 pages a day, showing that when inspired he could still write the keys off a typewriter. He was going good until he was hit with “another” tax bill: “Really got slapped with a sackful of shit today; seems I owe the city of Williamsport about \$150.00 in taxes and tax penalties.”

He finished Hos Hostigos and fired it off to Ken White on September 4th. Enclosed was this letter to John W. Campbell:

*Dear John:*

*Here's the third of the Kalvan stories. The original idea was that Kalvan should make his father-in-law, Prince Ptosphes, Great King; for reasons set forth in the body of the story, this didn't seem such a good idea, and Kalvan, as you will see, becomes Great King himself. Now, I am pretty much like Ike Asimov trying to figure out where to put the Second Foundation. Kalvan is Great King and Hos-Hostigos is really beginning to pick up Hos-power, but Styphon's House isn't down yet, let alone out, and the Great King of Hos-Harphax (down around Havre-de-Grace, Md.) isn't going to take this secession from his realm placidly. To carry the story on further, I'm going to have to do a lot of figuring. I still want to fight the battle of Breitenfeld at Gettysburg—Breitenfeld is an excellent battle for this cultural and technological level, and Gustavus Adolphus had about the same impact on the Austrian Empire and the Catholic Church as Kalvan is having on Hos-Harphax and Styphon's House.*

*The battle of Fyk, in this story, was actually fought, under the circumstances*

*described, at Barnet, about twenty or thirty miles east of London, in 1471, between the Yorkist army under Edward IV and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the Lancastrian army under the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Somerset, and John Vere, Earl of Oxford, did the same thing to the Lancastrians that Balthames did to the Saksi. Even the incident of crawling forward and lying all night under the midrange trajectory of the guns is from Barnet.*

*This penicillin suggestion; this is the very last thing Kalvan would want to do. He doesn't want to shift Styphon's House into a new racket, he wants to smash it. As it stands, with a monopoly on gunpowder, they control the princes. But if he gets them working miraculous cures, he'd give them a popular following, which they now don't have.*

*I know you like victories by slick tricks, but slick tricks run out, sooner or later, and in any case they're good odds-cutters and that's all. The best answer to slick-trickery is always a fast punch in the nose. The Japanese tried that heroin trick in China, before the formal beginning of World War II, when Chiang Kai-Shek was in control. His answer to it was to kill all the heroin peddlers and all the heroin addicts, he could. Nothing like a hundred-odd grains of copper-jacketed lead injected at six or eight hundred fs at the base of the brain to cure anything. Of course, if Chiang had been a nice humanitarian type, it might have worked, but he wasn't.*

*So if Kalvan wants to destroy Styphon's House, and destruction is the only thing he can do about it, and wants to maintain his new Great Kingdom, he'll have to do it where it counts, on the battlefield. He can, and will, soften them up by all sorts of slick tricks; he can start them fighting among themselves—see what happened to Prince Gormoth, in*

*this story—but when they're softened up enough, the troops will have to move in and finish it. As long as soldiers don't let statesmen, professional slick-tricksters, squander their victories at the peace conference, that settles it.*

*George Clemenceau made the remark that 'War is too serious a business to trust to generals.' Well, judging from the one he helped make at Versailles in 1919, peace is too serious a business to trust to statesmen.*

*Kalvan's big advantage, as will be noted, is that Styphon's hierarchy don't believe in Styphon themselves. Atheists make excellent clergymen in normal times, they never get scared by their own sermons. But offer them a chance to be martyrs and see what happens.*

*Yours cordially*

*Beam*

With Hos-Hostigos finished, Beam returned to his historical novel: “Worked A.M. on background for historical novel, probable title, “Only the Arquebus,” battle of Cerignola. Out P.M., did some shopping, got a haircut. Had dinner at Heylmun's, and home about 1930. Got Sabatini's “Life of Cesare Borgia” and, for the fourth time, Prescott's “Ferdinand & Isabella” out of the library. Spent most of the evening on them...”

September 10th, “Worked for a while on background and planning. Trying to get a story, with love interest, to fit historical facts. Heavy going.”

Mike Knerr writes: “Beam got everything he could from the book by Sabatini and

shifted his attention to Prescott, but added wearily, ‘...*don’t seem to have recovered from the PittCon yet.*’ Small wonder: conventions of the science fiction community seem to be marathons dedicated to see how long a person can stay on their feet and drink without collapsing.”

September 12th, “Worked on background A.M., got a volume of Guizet’s French History at library. Very little in it—Guizet was a patriotic Frenchman and the invasions of Italy by Charles VIII and Louis XII were not greatly to the credit of France. Worked all evening putting what I got from Sabatini together with Prescott. From now on it’s going to be mostly Prescott. Still don’t have an idea about fiction story.”

Beam spent most of the next two weeks in fruitless research and ‘doodling out notes’ for “Age of the Arquebus” that didn’t work into a story. On September 23rd, 1960, “I do have a lot of history, and have the geography of southern Italy in mind, but still no story.” As Mike Knerr says, “H. Beam Piper was not the kind of historian/writer who would tamper with the facts, even in a novel. Historical license was not a phrase he used at all. He was ‘trying to work up an idea for love-interest for story, or, rather, trying to invest the idea I have with some color of historical plausibility, and having heavy going at it.’ When he turned in at midnight on October 2nd, he scribbled, ‘I wish to Christ I could get something done.’

During this time, Beam wrote very little in his diary, either about the stories he was working or the ones he was planning. Most of the story information comes from his letters. In a March 22nd, 1963 letter to Jerry Pournelle, Beam provided the only existing summary of his historical novel, “Only the Arquebus:”

*Dear Jerry,*

*...Having just finished a story in the VII Century A.E. (“Fuzzy Sapiens” jfc), I have now dug out the historical novel on which I have been working intermittently, when I have not been pressed by necessity to get something quickly saleable done, for the last couple of years. This is early Sixteenth Century C.E. (Christian Era jfc)—1502-1503, to be exact—and Ferdinand of Spain and Louis XII of France are fighting over the kingdom of Naples.*

*This is strictly a zero-sum game; Ferdinand and Louis have made a treaty partitioning the Neapolitan Kingdom between them, and now each is trying to grab the whole thing and shove the other out completely. Ferdinand is a smart crook and Louis is a stupid one. Louis’ commander, the Duc de Nemours, thinks war is a large-scale tournament, and its purpose is to enable gallant knights to perform deeds of valor and gain chivalrous renown; Ferdinand’s commander, Gonzalo de Cordoba, thinks the purpose of war is the destruction of the enemy’s armed force.*

*In addition, the Spaniards have a new and terrible weapon, so dreadful as to make war unthinkable; it is called the arquebus. They have a lot of them, and the French haven’t. Figure it out for yourself from there. The story will come to its final climax on the battlefield of Cerignola, where Nemours’ knights and men-at-arms were shot to scrap-iron by Gonzalo’s arquebusiers, a victory strikingly parallel to Andrew Jackson’s at New Orleans.*

*You know, it must have been lovely, living in an era when the Clauseqitzian ‘extension of politics by other means’ was accomplished with nothing more lethal or*

*expensive, especially expensive, than black powder. I suspect that one ICBM with a thermonuclear warhead represents enough money to have financed the whole Neapolitan war, from Charles VIII's first invasion in 1494 to Gonzalo's expulsion of the French after the Garigliano campaign in the winter of 1503, on both sides.*

*Of course, it must be remembered that there wasn't as much money around then as now, and kings were habitually broke and trying to make the payments on their last palace, and military campaigns were often brought to a standstill because the mercenaries were out on strike for their back pay. What's that French saying about the more it changes the more it's the same thing?*

*Beam*

\* \* \*

After mailing Hos-Hostigos and the cover letter to Ken, Beam started work on an article on the use of firearms for a writer's magazine. "Spent morning and early afternoon working on the writers' magazine article in pencil—getting it put into shape. Jan Robbins called on phone, told him about writers' meeting. About 1900, odd little incident—

"At my desk, I heard hall door open stealthily. Thought it might be Jan slipping in prankishly; picked up a cutlass, also prankishly, and went down the hall. Instead, it was some perfect stranger, a young punk in dungarees, who was looking around in the hall. Surprised, scared when he saw cutlass, mumbled something about wanting to rent a room, and got out. Might have had some trouble with him, except for cutlass."

Knerr writes: "That was the old H. Beam Piper and he appeared to be back to his true

form, fooling around with guns from his collection or attempting to play a prank with a sword. His writing was picking up and he appeared fine...He got Arms and the Writer finished, mailed it out and launched into the novelized version of the three *Analog* stories.”

The book title was “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” as Beam explains, “which is probably no worse than what Ace would call it, if they published it.” This puts to rest the stories that some anonymous Ace editor patched up the three novelettes and turned them into a novel. It didn’t happen that way. Beam started work on the novel on September 13th, and by the 21st was already on page 155 in between work on his stalled historical novel. When he knew where he was going, Piper could write up a storm!

“On the following Sunday,” Mike Knerr writes, “he was ‘within plain sight of the end (of “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen”).’ I dropped in on him, after phoning, to do an article on him and his collection for my newspaper. We photographed many of his pieces on the floor and I took a shot of Beam pulling the sword out of his cane. We talked awhile and I left: Piper went back to work, finally winding up his marathon writing stint on September 30th.”

“I suspect there was more than a bit of desperation in his speedy novelization of the Kalvan novelettes. He needed to have some incoming money to take care of him through the winter. On October 3rd, he wrote, “Another do-nothing day; still fagged from getting Kalvan finished; ought to be snapping back, but seem to have little or no snap left in me. Fiddling with detective story I was working four on five years ago—will probably waste months on it, get nothing out of it.” He was also working on *The Tactical Seesaw* for a lecture he was giving at Lycoming College.

On October 8th, “Wrote Ken White to prod him up; hope it gets results. Am beginning to distrust him.” What Beam didn’t know was that Ken had died on October 2nd. Beam didn’t learn about it until the 12th. “Still working on the lecture, am now up to the Thirty Years’ War. Received a phone call from Ken White’s wife with news of his death ten days ago. The manuscript of “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” is in her hands; doesn’t know what’s happened with Hos-Hostigos. A hell of a situation! She gave me name and address of another agent, a friend of Ken’s, Max Wilkinson. Will have to get in touch with him, see if he will represent me.”

The next day, Beam fired off a letter to John Campbell inquiring about Hos-Hostigos:

*Dear John:*

*I was informed yesterday of the death of my agent and good friend, Kenneth White, ten days ago. I had not heard from him for some time previous—I understand that he had been ill for several months—and do not even know if he received the manuscripts of the third Kalvan stories or sent it on to you. This story is entitled Hos-Hostigos. I would much appreciate your letting me know whether you received it and if so what you’ve decided to do about it.*

*I have made arrangements by telephone with Mr. Max Wilkinson, of Littauer & Wilkinson, 500 Fifth Avenue, to represent me in the future. Agents are replaceable; friends aren’t.*

*Nice cover for Gunpowder God, but who told the artist that Pennsylvania State cops wear blue? They don't, they wear gray. And the red keystone doesn't belong, that's 28th Division, PNG. Otherwise splendid!*

*Yours truly*

*Beam*

Next he sent off a letter to Wilkinson, his new agent, and went back to working out his upcoming lecture. On October 14th, he got a letter: "Letter from an agent, Jay Garon, offering his services. A nice letter, shows that I am known and considered. Had to send regrets." As Mike Knerr notes in "PIPER": "It's strange that he didn't try to learn more about Mr. Garon, and put all his eggs in one basket—a basket he was taking on faith."

Four days later, Beam wrote, "Home about 1830, and spent all night reading—fell asleep about 1930, woke, quite sleepless, at 2200, and read till 0600—"Murder Frozen Over"—the Jeff Rand story I never could sell. This is carrying it about as far as I ever have."

Beam gave his lecture on October 19th to a gathering of the Phi Alpha Theta fraternity and returned home to work on story ideas. On October 21st, he wrote, "Letter, very brief, from John Campbell—Hos-Hostigos bounced back to Ken White, with letter, so no money coming in. Campbell probably wants re-write. Nothing yet from Wilkinson—have I an agent, or haven't I? Morale badly down."

John Campbell wrote:

*Dear Beam:*

*Your letter telling me about Kenneth White's death came as a shock. I hadn't heard.*

*"Hos-Hostigos" was returned to Kenneth on September 16th with a letter.*

*Regards*

*John W. Campbell*

For a man who majored in understatement, Beam's last letter to Campbell is a telling comment. The death of his friend and agent was a terrible blow; Beam had already run through several agents and didn't have a lot of faith in the breed. He could not get in touch with Wilkinson, who was not returning his calls, and was feeling completely adrift.

On the 26th of October, "Worked on story-planning till 1400—think something has finally arrived. Wrote to Wilkinson—is he or isn't he?—and to Campbell—what about Hos-Hostigos?" The next day his morale was sinking even lower. "Cough and cold persist; don't feel too good. Can't seem to get anything done."

Beam's final letter to John W. Campbell:

*Dear John:*

*Your letter of the 19th arrived. As I think I told you in mine of the 13th, I had a telephone conversation with Mr. Max Wilkinson, of Littauer & Wilkinson, inquiring if he would be willing to take over as my agent. To this he agreed, but since then I have heard nothing from him, although some report on the state of my affairs in Ken's hands at the time of his death seems rather overdue. Now I don't know whether I have an agent or not, and until I hear something positive to that effect, I'll have to act on the assumption that I don't.*

*For one thing, I have not received the letter which you sent accompanying return of Hos-Hostigos, and except for your brief note, know nothing about it. Apparently Ken was ill for some time before he died, and never got around to forwarding it on to me. I was delaying answer to yours of the 19th in hope that it would come in.*

*Do you want a revision of the story? If so, I would be deeply grateful if you would write me, giving me a resume of the letter which accompanied it back to Ken, and telling me what needs to be fixed up about it. If you would do so, I will get to work on it immediately.*

*I am, with best wishes and thanking you in advance.*

*Yours Cordially,*

*H. Beam Piper*

This letter is as close to begging as Beam ever came, all but pleading for John Campbell to send him a carbon of Campbell's revision letter. Sadly, Campbell never

replied—or if he did, it’s lost. Beam doesn’t mention it in his diary and this is what Campbell had to say about it all in a November 18th, 1965 letter to John Clark—the same John Clark who wrote the introduction to the Twayne Triplet, which contained Beam’s first published novel, “Uller Uprising.”

*Dear John:*

*That H. Beam Piper story business has caused one helluva mess. It goes this way: We bought the first and second Lord Kalvan stories from Piper, through his agent Ken White. “Hos-Hostigos,” the third, was submitted by Ken White, and I sent it back for some revision with an eight page letter of explanation.*

*Three months later I heard from Piper that Ken White had died suddenly, leaving his affairs in such a mess that nobody had done anything for a couple of months. So Piper didn’t know what I’d said about “Hos-Hostigos,” and never got my letter. And I, by then, didn’t remember the yarn exactly enough to be able to redo the letter without seeing the manuscript. So Beam was broke, and apparently decided to go out sideways—suicidewise.”*

*John W. Campbell*

Obviously, John Campbell didn’t have any idea of just how desperate Piper’s financial situation had gotten. Campbell couldn’t, or didn’t bother to, read between the lines of Beam’s letter and so Piper was left out on the ledge. He was running out of

money, his ‘supposed’ agent wasn’t writing or calling, and then another disaster on October 29th, 1964 he writes: “Now the city income tax people are on me—I’m damned if I know how I’m going to make out. Letter from Wilkinson—he is acting for me, will go over Ken’s files after the first, and he has sent “Lord Kalvan” to Ace.”

Beam was at a standstill; he didn’t know whether or not to finish the next installment of the Kalvan story. Since he had created two novellas out of his proposed Part II (Kalvan Kingmaker original title): Down Styphon! and Hos-Hostigos, there was still Part III to write—no telling how that might have turned out...

As Mike Knerr notes: “The next day (October 30th, 1964) he went to the bank and drew everything out but two dollars, did some shopping and returned to the gunroom for another writing session. There’s no mention in the diary of what the new story was about or even a working title. He read his lecture to the Writers’ Club on the 2nd of November.”

On Wednesday, November 4th, 1964, Beam wrote, “Up 0930. Worked till mid-P.M. on planning. Out 1600 for a little, read in evening; to bed 0030. Yesterday’s election a bad—but not unexpected defeat; Goldwater carried Arizona and a few of the Deep South states; Johnson everything else, including Maine and Vermont. The only thing that will save this country now is an Act of God, and God doesn’t exist.”

On Thursday, November 5th, thinly scrawled in weak pencil is a notation that Beam awoke at 9:00A.M.; half-an-hour later it had begun to rain. That was to be his final entry... With no money in the bank, no agent, no money coming in anytime soon, H. Beam Piper, absolutely unwilling to go on the public dole or ask his friends for assistance, placed painter’s drop cloths over the walls and floor of his apartment and shot

himself with a .38-caliber pistol. Thereby bringing a sudden and conclusive end to his life and works.

His suicide note read, in typical Piper fashion: “I don’t like to leave messes when I go away, but if I could have cleaned up any of this mess, I wouldn’t be going away. H. Beam Piper.”

He left a hell of a mess for John W. Campbell and Ace Books. After Beam’s death, Max Wilkinson went ahead and sold the paperback rights to “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” to Donald Wolheim at Ace Books. Wilkinson didn’t bother to tell Campbell about the sale and, as a result, the Ace paperback came out before the second Kalvan novelette, *Down Styphon!*, was published in *Analog Science Fiction*.

\* \* \*

“Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” had long been one of my favorite novels and, as a Renaissance warfare buff, I enjoyed the realistic battles and Piper’s military expertise. It’s also one of the best adventure stories ever written, with great action scenes, romance and a hero for all ages. It only has one problem; the story is incomplete. There’s no resolution. While re-reading it for the fourth or fifth time, I came up with an idea for a sequel based on a Styphon’s House counter-reformation.

I shared my ideas with Jerry Pournelle and he liked them. However, Jerry was in the middle of a new novel with Larry Niven and suggested I get together with Roland Green. They had just finished their collaborative novel: *Janissaries - “Clan and Crown,”* a novel heavily influenced by Piper and “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen.” By a strange coincidence, or synchronicity (your call), Roland, another military science fiction writer, had also just talked with Jerry about co-authoring a “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” sequel. Jerry

brought the two of us together and wisely got out of the way.

Next, we contacted Ace Books, who were still reveling in the success of Bill Tuning's "Fuzzy Bones;" they gave us an enthusiastic thumbs-up on the Kalvan sequel with a decent advance. Ace was pleased with Roland's contributions to the second Janissaries book and Ace had made a lot of money with the four Piper short story collections I had edited for them. Roland and I had never met in person, but we found an immediate rapport over the phone on matters Kalvan and Hostigos.

Roland flew out to Los Angeles in 1984 and stayed in our Chatsworth home for about 2 weeks, while we hammered out the plot and worked out the background for "Great Kings' War." The plot outline of the book turned out to be more ambitious than we originally thought, so we divided it into 3 parts, covering the 3 years after "Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen."

We saw lots of possibilities for the sequel, but all would come to naught if Styphon's House proved to be the paper tiger it was in *When In The Course...* (See "Federation"). As we saw it, our first job was to stiffen the spine of Styphon's House, which was reeling from Kalvan's initial military success in Hos-Harphax. We put some iron in the Inner Circle by bringing the Machiavellian Archpriest Anaxthenes and the Savonarola of Styphon's House, Archpriest Roxthar, as well as creating the Order of Zarthani Knights (The Teutonic Knights of Aryan-Transpacific) as a counter-balance to Hos-Hostigos growing power.

To see how well we worked together as a team, Roland and I wrote the ending of our three part novel first: this segment was later published as *Siege at Tarr-Hostigos* in the "There Will Be War" anthology series. Writing the ending first is an old writer's trick,

because it allows the author, as he writes the book, to tie up the plot line very tightly. Often times, endings are the most difficult part of the story to pull off, thus, knowing the tough part is already finished can be very liberating.

Our initial idea was to open “Great Kings’ War” about a year after “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen.” After Roland left to return home to Chicago, I brainstormed the period between “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” and the opening of our proposed sequel. The storyline I came up with was so interesting that we decided to include it in the novel. As a result, “Great Kings’ War” opened only a few months after “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen.” We began writing the book, alternating between different chapters. The writing went very well, maybe too well!

About six months into the novel and some four hundred pages later, it dawned on us that we were less than a third of the way through our original plot outline! After a few telephone conversations, we concluded that we’d better bring the book to a swift conclusion, or we were going to have a book the size of “Lord of the Rings,” as well as a very ticked off publisher. (In the mid- ‘80’s a paperback over four hundred pages had to be printed on a special and more costly press and in those days this was not done lightly, certainly not because the authors decided the book should be double the length of the contracted novel!)

Since we were having a lot of fun writing “Great Kings’ War” together and had already planned to do three or four follow-up novels to “Great Kings’ War” (after all, how could we end the series with “Siege of Tarr-Hostigos?”), we thought why not? We ended the book just where the first third of our outline came to an end, and then: Viola!, Part One ended up becoming “Great Kings’ War, book two of the Kalvan Saga.

“Great Kings’ War” was written in high spirits with lots of long distance calls between Chicago and Southern California. For both of us, collaborating on the sequel to one of our all time favorite novels, was a whale of a good time and one we hoped to repeat very soon; after reading the galley proofs science fiction luminary, Andre Norton, asked us when we were going to write the sequel. The initial success of the paperback (it reached #1 on the “Locus” Paperback Bestseller List) boded well for future books. The first edition sales were very good for a paperback original.

Roland’s career, meanwhile, went white hot and was suddenly doing a series for Tor Books and two series for Ace Books, Peace Company and Star Cruiser Shenandoah. Since the agent representing us was Roland’s agent, she was much more concerned about Roland’s solo works than our collaboration. She saw this as make it or break it time for Roland’s career as an SF writer. She was right, but in retrospect she may not have given him the best career advice...since both the other series eventually tanked.

Meanwhile, I was chomping at the bit to get back to work on the next Kalvan book. So while Roland’s agent kept putting obstacles, i.e. higher priority Roland Green books in the way, I went ahead and began writing the sequel myself in 1986.

At that time, Jerry Pournelle and myself were editing a number of successful anthology series, including Imperial Stars, There Will Be War and War World, an original shared-world anthology that takes place in Jerry’s Empire of Man future history. I was also Treasurer and Vice President of the Science Fiction Writers of America so it was a busy time for me as well.

It was also an exuberant time for things related to Kalvan and Aryan-Transpacific, Styphon’s House Subsector. I was corresponding with a number of “Lord Kalvan of

Otherwhen” and “Great Kings' War” fans that had written to me after the publication of the book. This group featured Jim Landau and the then fledgling SF writers Harry Turtledove and S.M. Stirling, both big Kalvan fans. Ideas, theories and research on 16th Century military warfare, Aryan- Transpacific geographical boundaries, Aryan migrations, Home Time-Line politics, Styphon's House revival and all sorts of things flew back and forth across the continent via snail mail. In the midst of this flurry of activity and research, I worked on the sequel until I finally brought it to a conclusion in 1988.

I had a complete first draft that ran over 620 pages and a collaborator who didn't have the time to read what I'd written, much less do a final draft.

That's where the “Great Kings' War” sequel (with working title of “Gunpowder God”) stayed until finally, at my insistence, Roland's agent approached Ace Books about a contract for the sequel. Ace sat on it for a few months, until pressured, whereupon, Ace's chief editor said they were no longer interested in doing the book!

I still believe that had we presented the outline and sample (the ending which was already complete) to Ace Books a few months after “Great Kings' War” was published, Ace would have jumped on “Gunpowder God” and it would have established the Saga for good. But, this was not to be. Ace books had been bought up by Putnam and their editorial direction had changed; they were no longer interested in science fiction adventure novels with heroic characters and strong male protagonists.

I suspect it's no surprise that Ace Books, at that time the number one paperback publisher of science fiction (according to “Locus Magazine”), is now near the bottom of the list.

Our agent did do us one big favor, after Ace rejected “Gunpowder God,” she asked for the revision of rights to “Great Kings' War,” since they were no longer interested in the Kalvan series. Without protest, (Roland's agent was Mr. Heinlein's agent and had mojo clout) Ace reverted the rights to us; the rights to an `orphan' series (since they still owned “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen.” Because of this, no other publisher has wanted to touch the series unless we could guarantee that Ace would “allow” them to re-print the original Kalvan novel, which wasn't likely to happen unless they paid Ace Books some Big Bucks.

After the “Fuzzies And Other People” (the “lost” Fuzzy novel) was published, Ace quietly let most of Piper's backlist fall out-of-print, including “Space Viking” and “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen.” The first two Fuzzy books were still available, but the rest of Piper's canon was relegated to the dustbin.

We did publish our “Gunpowder God” incomplete ending in “There Will Be War: Volume VIII, Armageddon” under the title, “Siege at Tarr-Hostigos.” A while later, Bob Adams, a big Kalvan fan, asked me to excerpt a portion of “Gunpowder God” for his alternate-world SF anthology “Alternatives,” which I did under the title “Kalvan Kingmaker.” I expanded the role of Ranjar Sargos and Great Master Soton and, for the first time, I realized that the original draft of “Gunpowder God” was going to have to be expanded before it was finally published.

Over the years I thought about having a small press put out a limited edition version of the book, but nothing ever came of it. I continued to get letters from Kalvan fans and kept up my correspondence with Jim Landau about future Kalvan books. Every time I visited A&M Book Cellars, Marty Massoglia would ask me when “Gunpowder God” was

coming out? I even talked with several editors I knew about re-releasing “Great Kings' War” and the sequel, but they weren't interested in buying and promoting an orphaned series. Without clear title to “Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen” no major publishing house was going to touch the Kalvan series.

The series stayed dormant until 1999, when I decided to complete the series once and for all. When I went on the web to see if there were any Piper sites, the first place I visited was David Johnson's website, a tribute to H. Beam Piper's and his great stories. We started to exchange e-mail and David convinced me to join the Piper List, which put me in touch with some wonderful Piper fans, who were still keeping Beam's torch burning.

For over a decade Marty Massoglia had tried to talk me into reprinting “Great Kings' War and then, if it was successful, publish “Gunpowder God.” Rather than re-publish “Great Kings' War” as my first project, I decided to return to “Gunpowder God” and go forward, not backward and try and get “Gunpowder God” into print. Once I began the re-write, which included scanning the manuscript and converting it to readable text, I noticed the story was already beginning to grow, as I added new scenes and even chapters. I soon realized that if I didn't do something quick, the book would soon rival “Dune” in length.

So, I went back to the original outline and discovered that “Gunpowder God” included both the second and third parts of the plot outline originally devised by Roland and myself. Voila!, problem solved. I cut the book in-half and decided I needed a new title. Since the manuscript of “Gunpowder God,” included the novella, Kalvan Kingmaker, I decided to use that as the title. The title was also a nod to Beam, since that

was the title he used for the rough draft of the second Kalvan novella, which later was split (sound familiar!) into Down Styphon! and the “lost” third novelette, Hos-Hostigos, the one that got lost after Ken White, his agent's, death.

With the title problem solved, “Kalvan Kingmaker” quickly wrote itself, well, almost. Still, I had a hell of a good time writing this book! Not only was it fun to write, but the expansion allowed me to more fully develop the First Level plot, expand the battle scenes, and provide more detail on life in Aryan-Transpacific. The final manuscript came in at around 584 pages. Pequod Press published a limited edition of 1,000 copies in 2001.

Over the next two years I re-wrote and fleshed out the second half of “Gunpowder God;” and it was published in 2004 under the title “Siege of Tarr-Hostigos.” A portion of this novel had been previously published in the military anthology series, “There Will Be War” edited by J.E. Pournelle and John F. Carr.

I am currently writing “Gunpowder God” which is already scheduled for publication in 2007. This book begins right after the final scene in “Siege of Tarr-Hostigos” and will take us another year in the life of Great King Kalvan, who now has an entirely new set of problems and obstacles... I am looking forward to seeing the Kalvan Saga through to its conclusion.

John F. Carr

Boalsburg, PA