

THE BEAR AND THE MAN WE DON'T WANT TO FORGET

by Ted Martin

If you ever have the chance to visit Jasper, Alberta, take it. You'll be bowled over by the breath-taking scenery, the wild-life and the smog-free air.

Jasper itself is a small town and is fortunate enough not to have been endowed with the ugly sprawl of its neighbour, Banff.

Jasper also has a man-made feature that makes it unique in this tourist driven environment. Take a walk to the railroad station. Awaiting you there is an 8 to 9 foot tall sculpture of a black bear with a white chest, a bear immortalized on the pages of Maclean's magazine during the 1940s and 60s. It is

Jasper the Bear.

Walk around the sculpture. Is there a plaque inscribed with basic information? No. Maybe there's a plaque nearby, on a wall perhaps...no. No name, no artist, no date.

Considering the Jasper the Bear feature was at the height of its fame approximately 40 years ago, maybe there's an excuse there for neglecting to provide the simplest line of credit. The general manager of Jasper Tourism and Commerce explained, "Discussions have been held about a plaque, but we have to meet National Park plaque guidelines. During our discussions with Parks Canada, they have suggested that they might take over placement of the plaque."

Go into a museum, a gallery, a university, a place of worship - most of the sculptures identify the creator and date of completion, if they don't, then in all probability they'll be a thousand-plus years old, their origins cloaked in antiquity.

In Jasper's case the sculpture isn't over a thousand years old and the sculptor isn't a member of a long lost tribe. The creator is Toronto-based, Winnipeg-born James (Jim) Simpkins. ▶

Canadian Film Strip Artists Visit Post To Study Methods



Pvt. Harold McIntosh and Pvt. James Simpkins of the Canadian Army, who spent several days here last week studying our film strip methods. Both men are artists and they are with the Film Productions Board of the Canadian Army; they spent five weeks at U. S. Signal Corps Center in New York before coming here -Medical Soldier Photo.

JASPER

By Simpkins



MACLEAN'S

Maclean's Magazine, August 15, 1949

Jim is hale and hearty and enjoying life, despite the slight setback of two recent eye operations. His humour is still as dry as a bag of silica gel, his pen line firm and definite and as such, would make a bank note engraver jealous - all this with an 88th birthday due on November 26.

Of course, Jim has had other pursuits in life: a stint with The Beaver-The Hudson Bay Company's magazine; a spell in the army with the Medical Corps and later attached to the Signal Corps security/intelligence group which led to a liaison with the then fledgling National Film Board, first in Ottawa, then in Montreal, a relationship which continued on a full-time basis for

approximately 10 years after Jim's demobilization. However, prior to that, Jim's army service took him to New York where he struck up a friendship with a budding cartoonist named Charles Addams. Addams as we all know went on to find fame and fortune via the New Yorker magazine with his creation of the macabre Addams Family.

Jim then decided to move the family home from Beaconsfield P.Q., to Toronto - the family consisted of wife Ethel, daughters Sandy and Janis and sons Scott and Brian. Enscenced in Toronto Jim began a lucrative freelance career with the Toronto Star, Maclean's, Maclean Hunter publications, various ad agencies,

a toy company and numerous magazines in the United States, the National Enquirer, to which, until quite recently, Jim submitted work, plus a collection of Jasper cartoons published by Ryerson Press.

Let's not allow him to fade into obscurity like a certain Canadian national magazine did when it celebrated it's 90th anniversary a few years ago, Ignoring Jim when it came time to honour it's writers and creators. Perhaps they couldn't track him down but you don't have to be a super sleuth to open up the Toronto white pages to: Simpkins, James, 71 Lakin Blvd., 423-7431.

At lunch a couple of weeks ago we chatted about Jim's family. A cousin, Oliver, was editorial cartoonist at the Sudbury Star until the mid 1970s. Jim's brother Henry was a leading portrait painter in Montreal (a magnificent, near life-size portrait executed by Henry of Jim's pre-teen daughters hangs in Jim's living room.) An uncle was a proof-reader at the Winnipeg Free Press a few years ago.

After the meal and the plates had been cleared away, Jim was left with a white placemat. In no time at all a pencil appeared, and 10 seconds later, an 8 x 10 fish appeared, with Betty Boop eyes, that was equal to anything Disney's artists created for the Little Mermaid. The waitress held it gleefully on high on her way back to the kitchen.

Local cartoonist are organizing a tribute to Jim in April - maybe a certain Canadian national magazine will get wind of it...

Simpkins...

Concept of Service No. 8
Cartoonist Simpkins believes that the world's great lovers have steeled themselves to their task—with an assist from the Warehouse Division, Dominion Bridge, of course!

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Visitors to the Canadian Premium/Incentives Show (1976) in Toronto had a chance to meet Canadian cartoonist, Simpkins.

"Okay, son! Now blow!"

THE STORY OF CANADA
by James Simpkins

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

As a teenager, Pierre Radisson is captured by the Iroquois near his home at Three Rivers, New France.

He is adopted into the tribe, learns the Iroquois language, how the Indians hunt, travel and make war. He becomes interested in stories of lands to the north, rich in furs. Finally, after several years, he makes his escape.

At home in Three Rivers, he tells his friends of the wealth of furs in Indian country.

Radisson and his brother-in-law, Grosseilliers, set out in 1659, bound for the fur country.

Once again, they start out for furs, reach James Bay, return with great bundles of pelts.

They cover most of northern Ontario, return with a rich cargo of furs.

The greedy governor of New France fines them and confiscates most of their furs. The two are furious.

They sail for France, but cannot obtain justice. Then they turn to England with a plan for making a profit in the fur trade.

The two woodsmen tell King Charles II and Prince Rupert of the fortune to be made in Canada's wilderness.