

Henry L. Porter (1901-51)

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Henry L. Porter was born in Albion in 1901 to Nellie Lyon Porter and Wells Porter (1872-1956), who is remembered as a piano tuner.

In 1908, Nellie died of cancer and Henry and his brother Alan were brought up by their father and Ella Jackson, a housekeeper. This place or residence was located on Ingersoll Street in Albion.

Henry attended Albion High School and at an early age demonstrated great artistic proficiency. After graduating, he studied at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and became a commercial artist.

Upon completing his education, he directed his own commercial art business in Buffalo for eight years.

Having faith in the animated cartoon industry, he joined the staff at Disney Studio in 1936 and moved to Los Angeles. He was one of the animators who created "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," the first cartoon



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for national organizations who used Disney characters in their advertising. He made illustrations used in Good housekeeping magazine and drew special comic strips such as "Snow White" and "Pinocchio" which were Sunday feature cartoons. He even designed specially requested insignia for branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and Walt Disney's own personal Christmas cards.

The circular photograph included here, taken in 1941, shows Walt Disney looking over Henry's shoulder at the special insignia which is pictured on the drawing board.

Everything was for Disney. Any idea the commercial arts came up with in the studio automatically got the stamp of Walt Disney Productions on it. The individual artists lost their identity because they all worked together for Disney. But the truth of the matter is, it was cartoonist Hank Porter, formerly of Albion, who actually worked on and formulated the many Disney characters including Donald Duck as we know him today.

He originated the Disney cutout books and paint books. He designed novelties, mechanical toys and invented games which featured all the famous Disney characters, including Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. He created many of the characters in Disney's 1941 triumph "Fantasia."

In addition to all this, he designed billboard posters

film that revolutionized and raised the cartoon medium from a short subject to a full-feature production.

However, he suffered from eye strain and transferred to the promotion department in the huge studio. This change proved to be a great benefit to him and Disney, for here he was able to combine his art ability with his creativity and versatility.