The Advocate

W. B. Ziff Co., 608 Dearborn St., Chicago Advertising Representatives

ILLUSTRATED FEATURE SECTION— April 16, 1932

How it Feels to be Drawing Cartoons for the Big Weekly Magazines

E. Simms Campbell, Cartoonist, is from St. Louis. He Pounded New York's Pavements for a Month; Now He Makes Covers for Hooey, Saturday Evening Post, Opportunity and Life.

Campbell and reproductions of four of his covers made for national magazines

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By ELMER A. CARTER

"I do not like the covers on Opportunity," the letter said. "I am sending you a cover per your request and I should like to do twelve for you. You needn't pay me a cent until the end of the year and then if your news stand sales have not increased you owe me nothing; if they have, then pay me $........"

The editor was taken back a little by the letter and its sharp criticism, although he admired the note of assurance in it. Looking at the drawing before him he was half way convinced that the self confidence of the writer and artist was based on real ability. And yet he deemed it advisable to answer in kind, to meet the challenge with another challenge. And so he wrote:

"I know that you have reached a high place in the commercial art field in St. Louis and I also know that you were awarded the St. Louis Post Dispatch Prize for your excellent black and white study, 'The Tornado,' but if you are as good as you think you are, and as I think you are, you will come to New York where the competition is 'hot.' If you can draw, you should be able to draw not only for Opportunity, but for Life, Judge, and other magazines."

A month passed—no reply—two months, still no reply. And then, one afternoon a young man came into the office.

He was of medium height, of unblemished brown skin, with a frank, open countenance and a disarming smile. About him was an air of confidence. He lost no time. "I am E. Simms Campbell," he said, "from St. Louis. I decided to answer your letter in person. Here I am in New York."

The editor had visions of countless young talented Negroes who had come to New York, just as confident, just as eager, just as ambitious as Campbell. He had seen them arrive. He had seen some of them depart dejected, disheartened, beaten by relentless competition and the color line. He became a little alarmed. After all, he thought, he was in part responsible for Campbell's decision to come to New York.

"Your job in St. Louis?" the editor asked. "Were you working?"

"Yes, I quit." There was finality in his voice. "I had been working for the Triad Studios but I decided to try New York."

There was no need of discussion. Youth will have its way. And so the editor merely said, "It won't be easy here. But I believe you will make it if you have the heart."

"I'll make it," came the reply, and he was gone.

The first month in New York Campbell spent looking for a job. It was a new experience for him. In St. Louis, where he was born, he had worked in the Triad Studios, one of the largest commercial art studios in the Middle West. His earnings were more than most young men of twenty-one years of age ever dream of earning and his job was secure. But always he had a persistent yearning to do magazine illustrations, covers, cartoons, caricatures. In the year he had spent at Chicago University he had been on the staff of the Phoenix, a humorous publication.

While a student in the Chicago Art Institute he had participated in the creation of a short lived College Comics, a magazine in which he did many drawings under various pseudonyms. He acted as art editor of the single issue of Reflexus Magazine. And it was the collapse of his dreams of magazine work in Chicago which finally prompted him to return to his home in St. Louis.

St. Louis, as far as the Negro is concerned, is a southern city. The traditions of the South did not admit of a Negro commercial artist. And failing to find employment in his field, Campbell sought and found a job on a dining car as a waiter.

Work on a dining car is exhaustive. It requires an even temper and tremendous energy. The apparently unperturbed and smiling waiter is often ready to drop, but he must keep on going as long as a passenger remains to be served. And the passengers represent every type of individual—the particular, the finicky, the nervous, the downright mean, and the frustrated slave driver—a throwback to slavery. Of his experience on the diners, Campbell merely says, "I was a good waiter."

Between meals he spent his time drawing—making caricatures of the passengers, the waiters, the steward. On his return trips to St. Louis he took his drawings to the various studios. Finally he was able to show his work to J. P. Sauerwein, manager of the Triad Studios. Sauerwein was impressed and hired him. And until Campbell resigned, Sauerwein was not only his boss but his friend, advising him, teaching him the advertising game from the inside.

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After a month of pounding the pavements, Campbell found a job in a New York advertising studio. Compared to the job he had left in St. Louis, it was insignificant. In his new job he received a salary just one-eighth of what he earned in St. Louis. But it was a job and he stuck to it. At the same time he entered the Academy of Design, hoping to gain increased technical knowledge.

Meanwhile in the interim he tried the offices of the various publications. They were usually crowded with aspiring artists, and as a rule he, with the rest, was dismissed courteously and informed that none of his drawings was acceptable to the editor.

He went on in this way for about a year, apparently making little progress. At the end of his first year, he was no nearer to the realization of his dream than when he was working in St. Louis.

During this period there came a temptation to return to the Triad Studios in the form of a telegram from his friend and former boss, Sauerwein. Campbell, after all, is a very young man. The difference in his earnings in St. Louis and New York irked him not a little.

Once more he came to the editor. "I haven't made it yet," he said. "And today I received this wire." He handed a familiarly yellow telegram to the editor. It was an invitation to return to the Triad Studios at an even higher salary. The editor perforce was silent. Why should he stay?

"I have decided," said Campbell, breaking in on the editor's thoughts, "I have decided—to stick it out in New York." The editor was relieved. That's what he wanted to say but he didn't dare.

And then soon after, Campbell met Ed Graham. Of Graham, he says: "I have never seen his like before, black or white." And one is forced to agree when one considers the part Ed Graham played in Campbell's subsequent career. They had been friends in their school days in Chicago, had worked together on the Phoenix.

But Graham had come on to New York and after a struggle had become one of America's outstanding cartoonists and caricaturists. A regular contributor to the humorous magazines, he knew the editors and they knew him. Campbell showed him some of his work. And without hesitation, he said—"I will take you around. This stuff is good."

It is not often a Negro boy meets a white boy like Ed Graham. But after all, the story of the Negro in America is largely the story of exceptional Negroes and exceptional whites. With Graham's guidance, Campbell was able to show his work to the editors and to make his first sales. One need not minimize the fine spirit of Graham, but if Campbell's work had not possessed a high degree of merit it is doubtful whether even his first sale would have been made.

Since then and for the past two and a half years the sprawling signature E. Simms Campbell has become familiar to a vast number who eagerly read America's humorous magazines. Covers and caricatures for Life, Judge, Hooey, caricatures for Ballyhoo, the Saturday Evening Post, College Humor, Chicagoan.

His fine black and white illustrations for Jack Kofoed's "Great Dramas in Sports," which have been running in Life, indicate that Campbell's talent is not confined to caricatures and cartoons. And his black and white studies in Opportunity are strikingly original, realistic and authentic. Christmas 1930 he had covers on both Life and Judge; Christmas 1931 the cover on Judge.

Just recently Campbell received a commission to draw a full page of cartoons every week for the New York

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WHEN WE WENT INTO WAR

By LEONARD MASSENBURGE

An Ofay Military Policeman Who Got Fresh

By LEONARD MASSENBURGE

Brest, France, the scene of this story was one of the busiest seaports in that country during the World War. Many regiments of colored soldiers known as the S O S (Service of Supply) were stationed here. And again, much race prejudice existed because many an American ship entered this port. Whatever sympathy the French girls had for our boys they were swayed in many instances by the lies circulated by soldiers and sailors of the other race.

Living conditions were not as good as they expected, yet they lived on and worked with the greatest assurance that many of the white boys who passed through this city on their way to the front would carry their hatred of black people to a place made possible by the shells, bullets and gas of the enemy.

A unit of a colored combat division arrived in this city from the interior on its way home. They were billeted in tents and barracks while awaiting orders to sail. Some worked and others loafed.

French women and girls with an eye for business circulated among the soldiers with oranges, candy and other articles to sell. The girls in particular, would be followed by an M.P. (Military Police) ofay, of course, to see that they were not "attacked" by our boys.

On the morning of the day that this unit sailed, a French girl of 18, and not bad to look at in spite of her wooden shoes, was selling her wares among the boys when they noticed an ofay M.P. keeping close to her. His nearness seemed to annoy the girl, but she tried to stick it out until she had disposed of her goods.

Nearing a group of soldiers, the M.P. caught hold of the girl's arm and tried to kiss her. For this she gave him a hard slap in the face. The men cheered the girl loudly for her

act and it made the M.P. very angry. Then he kicked the girl's basket of oranges, candy and other articles all over the place.

She began to cry and he let out a big laugh. This act of cowardice aroused the men who gave him a good beating. He was made to pick up every orange, piece of candy and the other articles and apologize to her.

The girl thanked the boys while the M.P. slunk off nursing bruises inflicted by black fists and feet.

That night, under a full-moon, this same unit boarded a transport in the harbor and set sail for the land of "liberty."

ENGLISH

Words Often Misused

Do not say, "We don't hardly ever go." Say, "We hardly ever go."

Words Often Misspelled

Depositor; or, not **er.**

Words Often Mispronounced

Clemency. Pronounce klem-en-si, first e as in "men," second e unstressed, accent first syllable.