

Andrew MacCurrie

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Andrew MacCurrie:

“When I worked over at the mill, John Swanson was engineer. First it was all English and Irish and Scotch and Yankees, and then a few Swedes come in and then the Polish. John Swanson had a big Swede workin' for him of the name of Carlson.

“The mill was shut doon for vacation aboot the middle of July, and there was only a few workin'. They let the fires go oot, and they were doin' a bit of repair work and the like o' that.

“So they didn't have very much to keep them busy, them that were workin' there, and one day they got talkin' about the big chimney. I don't know how high it is. You've seen it yourself, you know it's goddom high, anyway.

“It's got a ladder on the ootside and an iron stairway runnin' up the inside of it. Anyway, they got talkin' about it, and Carlson bet he could go up the inside of it. He bet ten dollars, and Russell MacBirney and two-three more of the lads took him up on it.

“They argued back and forth about how they were goin' to know when Carlson got to the top. Carlson said he wouldn't cheat 'em, he'd forfeit the bet if he couldn't make it all the way to the top, but they said to hell with that, they wanted proof that he got there, you see.

“So finally they told Carlson to take a newspaper with him, and they'd all go ootside and watch for him, and he was to wave the newspaper oot of the chimney when he got to the top. So they went oot, and Carlson started up with the newspaper.

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“When he got to the top, he waved it oot of the chimney 2 all right, and MacBirney and the other lads were satisfied, but one of them that came in on the bet, I can't just recall his name right now, he said he couldn't see anything.

“Carlson come doon, all covered with soot, and coughin' and chokin', but the poor deevil amost coughed his lungs oot, but still the lad swore he never saw the newspaper. Finally MacBirney got sick of it, and he says ‘All right if you're so goddom cheap as all that I'll give you your money back myself. It's worth the dollars for any mon to climb up there.’ At that the lad thought shame, so he said as long as the rest of them were satisfied, it was all right with him.

“So they give Carlson his ten dollars. The climb never hurt him any. He come to work the next day and they asked him how he felt, and he said he never slept very good that night, but that was all. He was a big strappin' Swede. Of coorse there wasn't any fires, you understand.”