

Harry Ludwig Rossoll et al: A Study of the Smokey Bear Artists



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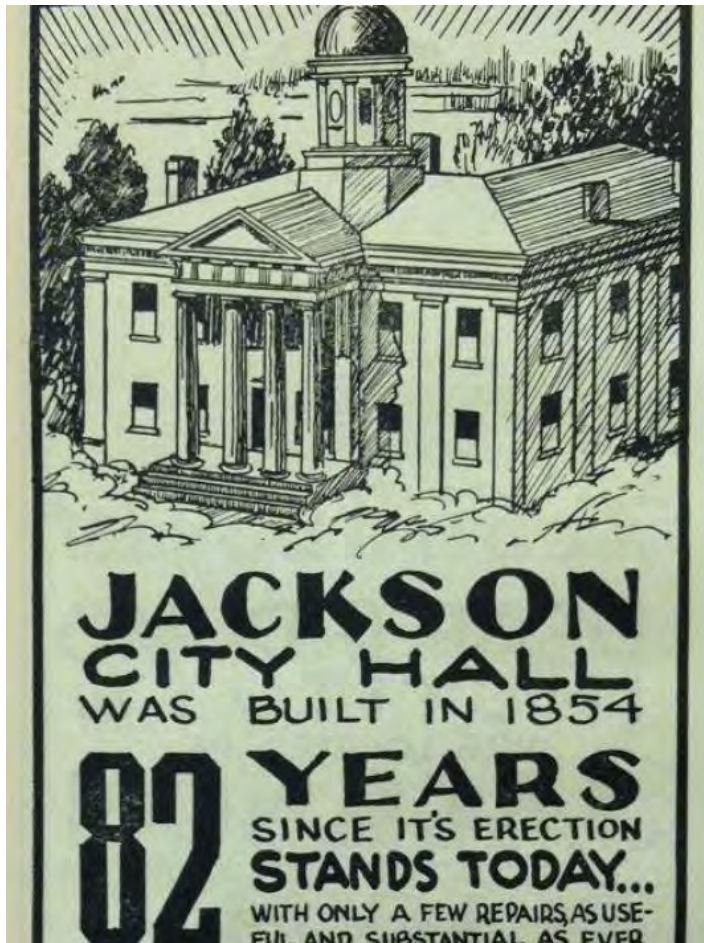
Abstract

The National Forests in Alabama is fortunate enough to have a Harry Rossoll oil on canvas painting in the Forest Supervisor's Office. The painting is signed, dated 1966, and depicts a family camping on the edge of a lake. Unfortunately, few people in the office know who Harry Rossoll was, or what purpose this painting served. Rossoll is one of several men credited with "creating" Smokey Bear. Rossoll was an illustrator in the Regional Office in Atlanta from 1937 to 1971, with a short break in the latter years of World War II. He was a prolific artist up until his death in 1999. In addition to Smokey Bear, Rossoll also illustrated books for the Forest Service and painted murals to celebrate the dedications of recreation areas and other public facilities. This study looks at art of Harry Rossoll and the other artists associated with the Smokey Bear images from 1944 to the mid 1970's. It is hoped with greater awareness more Rossoll paintings will be located across the Region and properly displayed or curated.

The Artists

Harry Ludwig Rossoll was born on September 20, 1909 in Norwich, Connecticut, the son of German immigrant factory workers. His parents wanted him to go into chicken farming, but from a very early age, Harry Rossoll wanted to be an artist. He remembered as a youngster his mother allowing him to draw murals on the kitchen and bathroom walls. He was also gifted musically, and became an accomplished trumpet player, playing in New York jazz clubs in the 1920s and with various groups in Georgia after his retirement.

He left Norwich before finishing high school and studied commercial art in Chicago and at the Grand Central Art School in New York in 1929. In the early years of the Great Depression, Harry Rossoll married Olga, and moved to her home state of Mississippi. They lived in Jackson, Mississippi, where Harry made a living as a commercial artist painting billboards and painting polka dots on women's shoes and other items. While in Jackson, Mississippi, Harry illustrated "Jackson Jewels and Jackson Today," a history of the city compiled by Mrs. Neppie R. Lockwood, published by the Jackson Printing Company in 1936, at a time when the WPA was creating state guides and travel books.



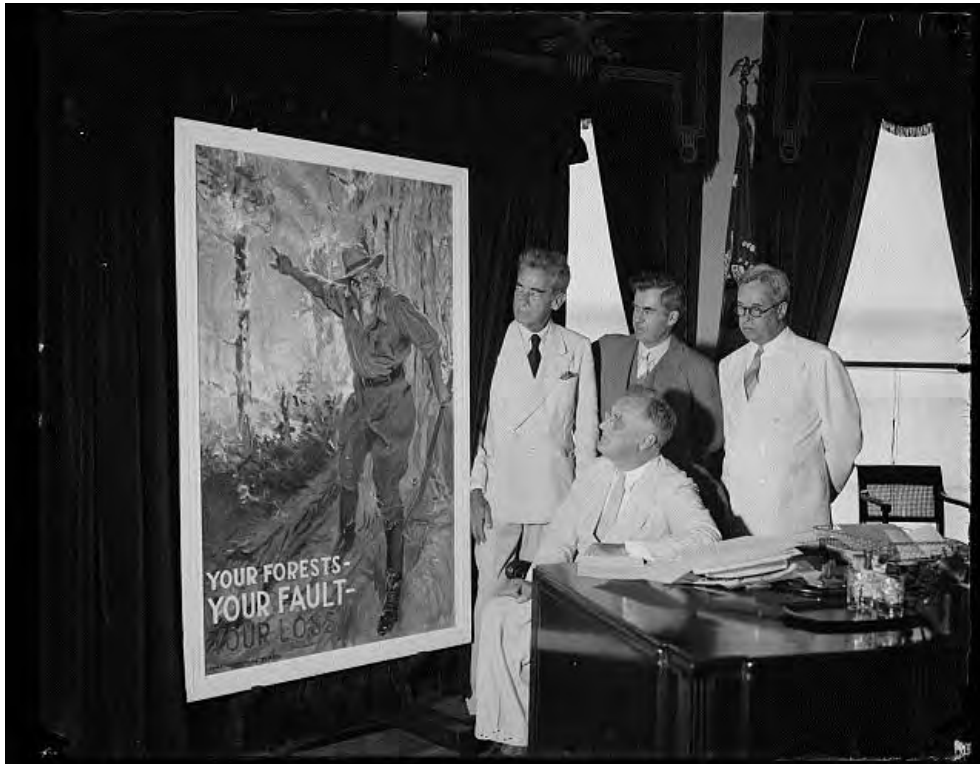
"Jackson Jewels and Jackson Today" as it appeared in *The Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, printed by the Jackson Printing Company, 1936.

In June of 1937, noted artist James Montgomery Flagg painted his iconic Uncle Sam in a Forest Service uniform pointing to a forest fire. The caption read “Your Forests, Your Fault, Your Loss!” An article appearing in *The Reading Eagle* (Reading, Pennsylvania) reported from Washington, D.C. that President Roosevelt had accepted the painting on behalf of the government. Flagg donated the painting, and thousands of posters were to be made from it in a campaign to prevent forest fires, which were destroying 40 million acres annually.

On December 14, 1937, *The Tuscaloosa News* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama) reported that the original oil painting was to be on exhibit in Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Selma, Dothan, Anniston, and Huntsville during the second half of December. James Montgomery Flagg’s Uncle Sam was well remembered from his World War recruitment posters and Liberty Loan Drives. His painting of Uncle Sam fighting a forest fire was his first donated work for the government since the war.



**James Montgomery Flagg’s
“Your Forests – Your Fault –
Your Loss!”, 1937**



President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepting the oil painting by James Montgomery Flagg, June 1937. Flagg is standing next to the painting.

In 1937, Harry Rossoll was hired by the U.S. Forest Service as an illustrator in the Southern Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1938, perhaps one of Harry's first illustrations for the Forest Service was the "Spirit of 1938," a poster showing three Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees on their way to fight a forest fire. The poster was later modified to the "Spirit of CCC."



**The "Spirit of 1938" left
The "Spirit of CCC" right**

The original "Spirit of 1938" was a 4-foot by 6-foot oil painting. In 1939 the painting was exhibited at the World's Fair on Treasure Island, San Francisco, California. Unfortunately the original has since disappeared.

The 1940 U.S. Census showed Harry L. Rossoll living on Terrace Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia as the head of a household. At the time of the census, Harry was 30 years old. Living with him were his wife, Olga H. Rossoll, age 30, his son, Karl L. Rossoll, age six, and his daughter, Helene M. Rossoll, age four. The census also showed that the family had been living in Jackson, Mississippi on May 1, 1935. Harry had worked a full 52 weeks in 1939 as a commercial artist for the U.S. Forest Service. He had earned \$2,100 in 1939.

There are several stories regarding the actual “creator” of Smokey Bear, and it seems none of the original artists received full recognition for their contributions until 50 or more years later, and after the artists had passed away. There are primarily three artists connected to the creation story of Smokey Bear: Rudolph Wendelin, Harry L. Rossoll, and Albert Staehle. Smokey Bear’s genesis as the Forest Service’s fire prevention campaign mascot followed the brief loan of a popular deer from Walt Disney.

In 1941, about 208,000 fires burned 30 million acres of forest and range land throughout the United States. Lumber was critical for the war effort, and the Forest Service’s fire-fighting corps had been depleted by the military draft. In 1944, the Forest Service and the Advertising Council worked together to create a fire prevention campaign poster. In August 1942, Walt Disney’s animated movie “Bambi” was released. Disney gave the Forest Service permission to use Bambi for one year in their fire prevention campaign in 1944.



Walt Disney’s Bambi poster, 1944

Rudolph “Rudy” Andreas Michael Wendelin, born in Ludell, Kansas in 1910, began his Forest Service career as a draftsman and illustrator in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1933. He transferred to Washington, D.C. in 1937. During the Second World War, Wendelin served as a Navy artist. When he returned to the Forest Service at the end of the war, he was put in charge of the Smokey

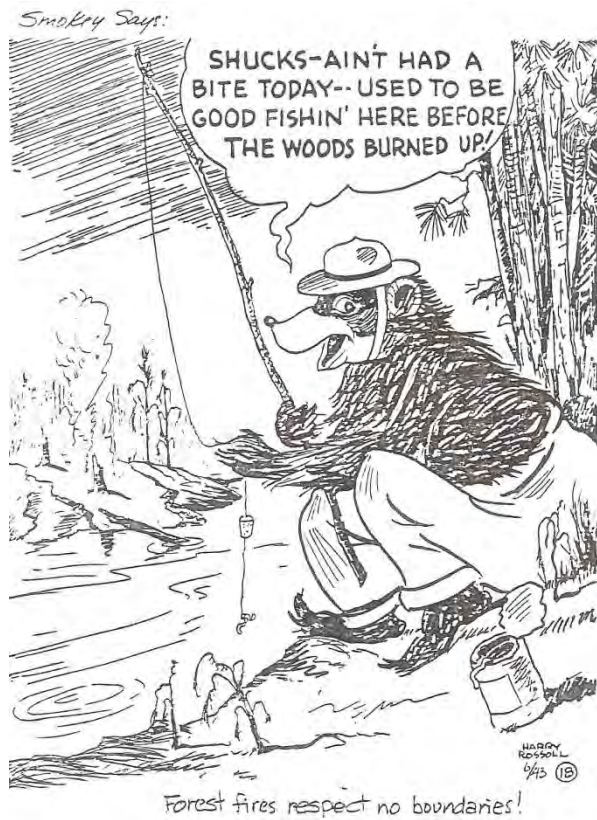
Bear project. According to an article that appeared in *The Washington Post* on September 5, 2000, after the passing of Rudolph Wendelin, it was under Wendelin's guidance that the bear changed. "What had originally been a baby bear and then a full-grown animal with long snout, fangs and fearsome claws, became a bear with more human features."

According to an article written by Jay Grelen in August of 1999 for *The Daily Oklahoman* after the passing of Harry Rossoll, when asked about getting credit for Smokey Bear, Rossoll would become irritated, but never bitter. According to the article, Rossoll had made several illustrations for the Forest Service's fire prevention efforts. His first creation was "Ranger Jim," a dapper and trim forest ranger with a neatly tied necktie and a pipe. Ranger Jim was a flop. Rossoll's second creation was the "Forest Fire Devil," a horned creature made of wood that had a natural aversion to forest fires. It was a second flop. The third creation was "Joe Beaver" who could beat out forest fires with his tail. The beaver was a third flop. Finally, H.M. Sears, the Fire Control Officer for the Forest Service in Atlanta and a friend of Harry's, suggested he try a bear.

Before leaving the Forest Service to serve in the Navy in March of 1944, where he was stationed in San Francisco drawing morale-boosting posters for the Treasure Island base, he submitted his bear. According to Rossoll, his sketch of Smokey was of a fat bear with a pointed snout and a bulb nose on the end. Rossoll thought it looked more like a possum in dungarees wearing an army helmet. His Smokey was not successful.



Harry Rossoll's Smokey Bear from April of 1943. The careless camper is out of frame except for his boots and droplets of sweat as a very angry Smokey cusses him out.



A Harry Rossoll “Smokey Says” from June of 1943. Once the image of Smokey was agreed upon, Rossoll would produce another 1,000 “Smokey Says” cartoons that appeared in over 3,000 newspapers.



Fire Prevention Poster by Harry Rossoll, 1944.

With both Rossoll and Wendelin temporarily away from the Forest Service in 1944 as they served in the Navy during World War II, the Forest Service and the Wartime Advertising Council asked Albert Staehle to create a mascot for their wartime fire prevention campaign for 1945. Staehle would also design the next two Smokey posters for the 1946 and 1947 campaigns.

Albert Staehle was born in Munich, Germany in 1899 and came to New York when he was 14 years old. He was a third-generation artist, and by 1944, one of America's most popular illustrators with many award-winning posters to his credit. In 1937, Staehle won a poster competition with his illustration of a matronly cow feeding her calf with a bottle of Borden's milk. This would later become the Borden Company's Elsie the Cow. After winning the competition, Staehle acquired the reputation of being an animal expert, and he used animals with human characteristics in many of his advertisement illustrations for such companies as Mobile Oil, Shell Oil, Gulf Oil, Arrow Shirts, and Western Electric. His animals also appeared on the covers of *Saturday Evening Post* magazine.



**Smokey Bear poster
painted by Albert Staehle
for the 1945 fire prevention
campaign.**



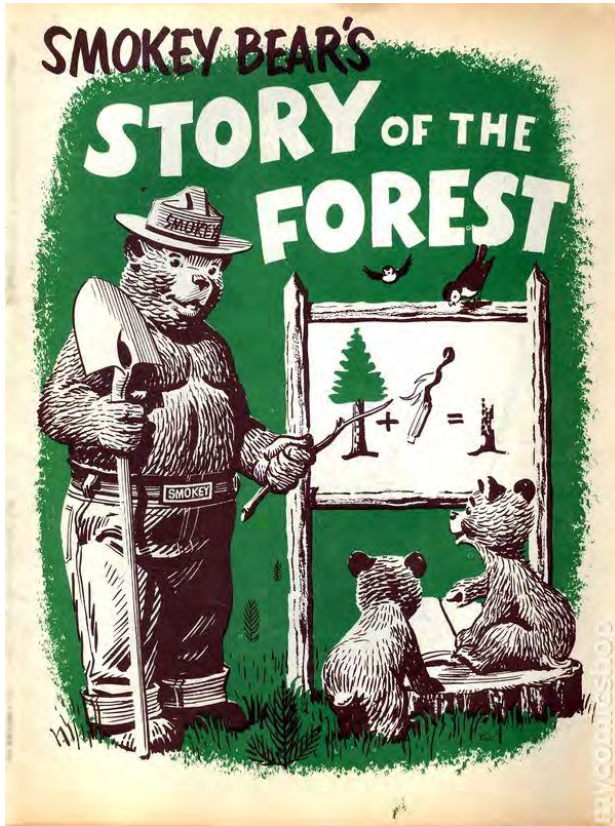
Smokey Bear posters from the 1946 and 1947 fire prevention campaigns by Albert Staehle. On left, "Smokey says - Burned timber builds no homes. Prevent forest fires." On right, "Smokey says - Hold 'till it's cold...prevent forest fires."

In the late 1940s through the early 1950s, a couple of other artists provided different interpretations of Smokey Bear. In 1947, Russ Wetzel painted a cartoonish Smokey that, while popular, was determined to be too humorous for the serious fire prevention message.



Smokey Bear poster by Russ Wetzel, 1947.

In 1948, James Hansen drew a “praying bear” asking people to be more careful with fire in the forest. Hansen continued to paint Smokey posters through the early 1950s.



“Smokey Bear’s Story of the Forest”
Published by the U.S. Government Printing
Office, 1951, by Harry Rossoll

Rossoll’s artwork is in the text of the
publication, but the cover art is by Rudolph
Wendelin. His “RW” is to the right of the
stump in the lower right corner.



Smokey Bear by
James Hansen, 1952.

While some sources claim that it was Rossoll’s Smokey that Rudolph Wendelin modified, a *New York Times* article on March 3, 1999 at the time of Harry Rossoll’s death, reported that Wendelin recalled softening the images on the James Hansen posters to create his version of Smokey.



This 1962 Smokey Bear Poster by Rudolph Wendelin is very similar to earlier Smokey Bear by the Lake by James Hansen from 1952.

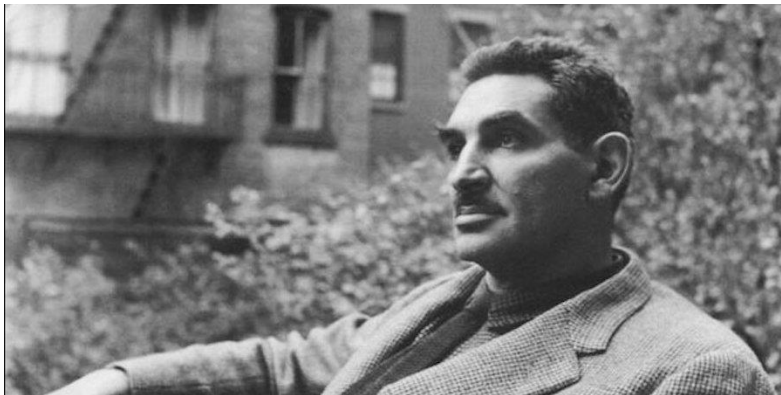


The more familiar Smokey Bear as drawn by Rudolph Wendelin. It is Rudolph Wendelin's Smokey that is used in "A Guide for Smokey Bear Logo Usage and Tagline Applications" produced by Foote, Cone & Belding in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, 2002.

In addition to the three artists, credit for the creation of Smokey Bear has also been given to art critic Harold Rosenberg. Harold Rosenberg, best known as a supportive critic of Abstract Expressionism, was born Abraham Benjamin Rosenberg in Brooklyn, New York on February 2, 1906. He graduated from St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY in 1927 with a degree in law. Shortly after graduation, he contracted osteomyelitis, which forced him to walk with a cane for the rest of his life and kept him out of military service (<http://www.theartstory.org/critic-rosenberg-harold.htm> 9/18/2015).

Rosenberg began work with the Office of War Information in 1942. (The Office of war Information worked closely with the War Advertising Council, later called the Ad Council.) He continued to work for the Ad Council after the war. Through the 1950's, Rosenberg gave lectures at colleges and wrote essays. In 1967, he was appointed the art critic for the *New Yorker* magazine. (<http://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/rosenberg.htm> 9/18/2015). Harold Rosenberg died July 11, 1978.

In several sources, Harold Rosenberg is given credit for coming up with the idea of Smokey Bear while working at the War Advertising Council. Richard Curland, writing for *The Norwich Bulletin* (Norwich, Connecticut) on the 70th anniversary of Smokey Bear on August 9, 2014, stated, "The visual character of Smokey was first created by an art critic by the name of Harold Rosenberg." (Norwich Connecticut was the birthplace of Harry Rossoll.)



Harold Rosenberg
New York, 1950

Another contributor to the creation of Smokey Bear was William Bergoffen, head of the public relations for the Forest Service in the early 1940s. According to his obituary that appeared in *The Washington Post* on April 12, 1999, Bergoffen was born in Monticello, New York, and graduated with a degree in forestry from Syracuse University. He began his career with the Civilian Conservation Corps in Georgia, and then worked for the Forest Service in Georgia and Mississippi before transferring to Washington, D.C. in 1939. Bergoffen was head of public relations when the fire prevention campaigns began in the 1940s, and he is credited with suggesting to Rudolph Wendelin that Smokey Bear wear dungarees and his iconic belt buckle.



Cartoon drawn by Rudolph Wendelin crediting Bill Bergoffen as “the man who put pants on Smokey.”

Yet another person who is given credit for the creation of Smokey Bear is Richard Hammett. Hammett was the director of the Wartime Forest Fire Prevention Program. On August 9, 1944, the official date of Smokey’s birthday, Hammett wrote a letter to the Forest Service describing Smokey. Some sources state that Hammett’s description was his idea of what the bear should look like, other sources state that this letter documented the description of the “agreed-upon” animal. In either case, the letter described a bear that was to have a “nose short (Panda type), color black or brown; expression appealing, knowledgeable, quizzical; perhaps wearing a campaign (or Boy Scout) hat that typifies the outdoors and the woods.” When the Forest Service celebrated Smokey’s 40th birthday in August of 1984 and published *“Remember Only You...” 1944 to 1984, Forty Years of Preventing Forest Fires, Smokey’s 40th Birthday*, it was stated that Hammett documented the agreed-upon bear.

While neither the Forest Service nor Ad Council ever appears to have copyrighted the image of Smokey Bear, the “Smokey Bear Act” was passed on May 23, 1952 (P.L. 82-359, Ch. 327, 66 Stat. 92; 18 U.S.C. 711; 16 U.S.C. 580p-2). This act restricted the use of the Smokey Bear character for profit, requiring the authorization of the Secretary of Agriculture after consultation with the Association of State Foresters and the Ad Council. Improper use of Smokey Bear could result in fines up to \$250 and imprisonment of not more than six months, or both.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s, Harry Rossoll produced 1,000 cartoons in a “Smokey Says” series that appeared in 3,000 newspapers. Rossoll produced four cartoons each month during this time. Many sources refer to Rossoll’s Smokey Bear “cartoon strip.” In fact, Rossoll’s “Smokey Says” was a single illustration rather than a “cartoon strip” like the later “Smokey the Bear” by Wes Wood.



Rudolph Wendelin working at his desk in 1954.



Harry Rossoll at work, August 23, 1962, (Photo Credit: Oklahoma Historical Society).

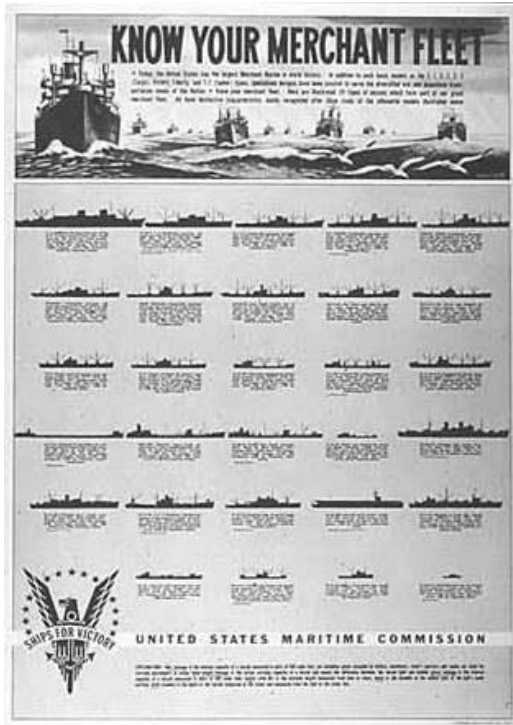
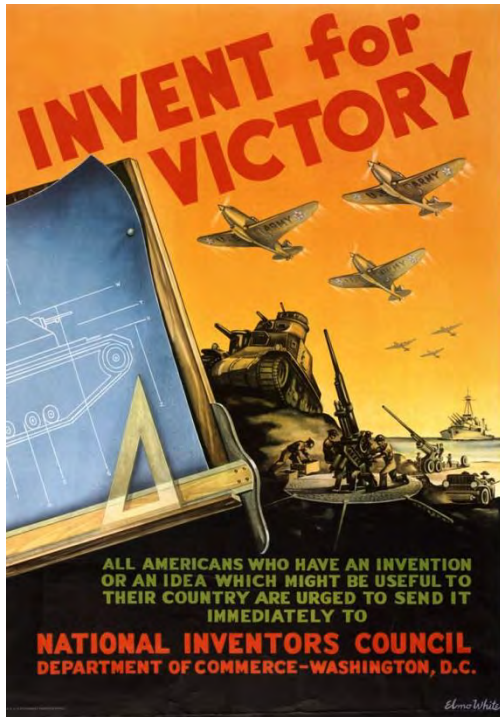


Harry Rossoll's "Smokey Says" cartoon dated July 1956.

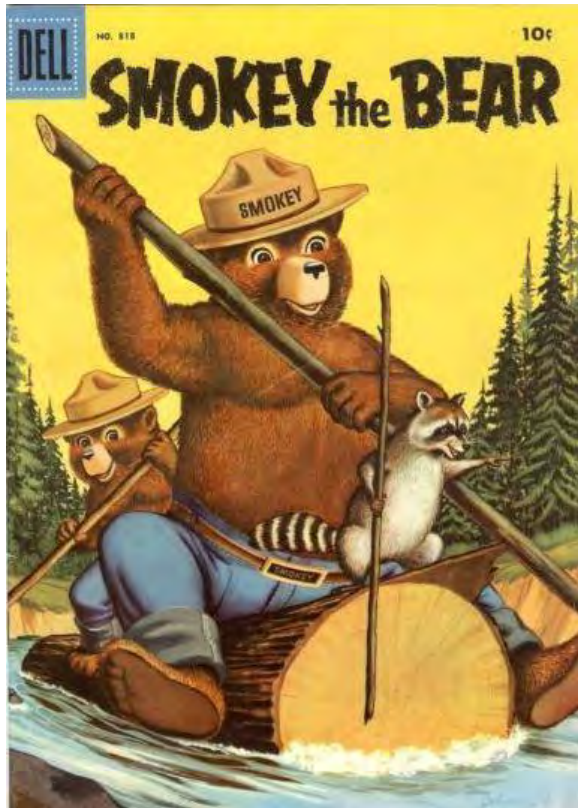
Several other artists were associated with Smokey Bear in the 1950s and 1960s. Morris Gollub, born in St. Louis, Missouri on October 6, 1910, started his career as an artist in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Custer National Park in South Dakota in May of 1935. In 1937 he became an animator for the Disney Studios. Between 1946 and 1971 he was a comic book illustrator for Dell Publishing and Western Comics. His artwork was used in "realistic adventure series" such as Tarzan, The Lone Ranger and Robin Hood. Beginning in 1955, Morris Gollub drew "Smokey the Bear" comic books for the Western Publishing Company. He also worked Pantomine Pictures, Sanrio, and Hanna Barbera, where he was a layout artist for shows including the Flintstones, Scooby-Doo, the Harlem Globetrotters, and the Smurfs. Between 1957 and 1959, Morris Gollub drew a comic strip for newspapers through Columbia Features. His "Smokey the Bear" color comic strip was written by Paul S. Newman. The artwork was credited to "Wes Wood," a pseudonym, or "nom de plume" (or more accurately, "nom de paintbrush") (https://www.lambiek.net/artists/g/gollub_mo.htm 9/10/2015).

Another artist that created an early Smokey Bear poster was Elmo White. White created a variety of artwork ranging from postage stamps to patriotic posters. He was a career artist for the federal government, beginning with the Government Printing Office and spending most of his

later career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. During World War II, the National Inventors Council worked with the Department of Commerce to solicit ideas and inventions that could be used in the war effort. In 1942, White created the poster “Invent for Victory” depicting the blueprints of a tank on drafting board with other military vehicles in the background. In 1944, White created the poster “Know Your Merchant Fleet.”



This Elmo White Smokey Bear poster from the 1950s is not in the USDA’s National Agricultural Library Special Collection. It is an unusual image of Smokey, with the face and fingers differing from other images of the period.



Dell Comic Books from the late 1950s, Western Publishing Company, Illustrated by Morris Gollub



“The True Story of Smokey the Bear”
Western Publishing, 1959
Illustrated by Morris Gollub



“Tarzan”
Comic Book,
cover art by
Morris
Gollub, 1960



“Smokey the Bear” by Wes Wood, September 29, 1957, Columbia Features.

In 1951, South Carolina artist Jackson Smyrl was asked by the South Carolina Forestry Commission to do three fire prevention posters. At the time, Jak Smyrl was the staff artist for *The State Newspaper*, and known for documenting South Carolina’s history through his cartoons. According to his obituary, he was born on May 5, 1923. After graduating from Camden High School, he attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn) but left to volunteer for the marines during World War II. After the war, he studied art at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and at the University of South Carolina. During his junior year, he began his career in commercial art taking a job on a daily Columbia newspaper. He was the first illustrator to put the Carolina Gamecock in a fighting stance. His Smokey Bear poster garnered him national attention. He died on August 7, 2007.

The “controversy” regarding “Smokey Bear” versus “Smokey the Bear” began in 1952 when Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins wrote the song. They added the “the” to Smokey’s name to keep with the tempo of the song. The song was tremendously popular, and the argument over Smokey’s real name ensued. Most people who were children in the 1950’s and 1960’s fall into the “Smokey the Bear” camp. While the Smokey in the comic books and comic strips drawn by Morris Gollub retained the middle name of “the,” the official name is “Smokey Bear.”



Jackson Smyrl’s cover on *The State Magazine*, October 15, 1950, and his three posters for the South Carolina State Commission of Forestry, 1951



Eddy Arnold Singing “Smokey the Bear” in a 1952 Public Service Program sponsored by the Ad Council, State Foresters, and the USDA Forest Service.

In the 1952, Eddy Arnold sang “Smokey the Bear” to a group of Boy Scouts in a Public Service Program. As Eddy Arnold sings, “Pierre” the camp cook, who looked very much like Harry Rossoll, draws illustrations to the song. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goEozOAQ6yI>).

By the late 1950s, numerous artists were providing illustrations for the Forest Service’s Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention (CFFP) program. The National Agricultural Library’s Special Collections has posters from 1946 to 1977, with artwork by Rudolph Wendelin, Richard Black, Merv Corning, Richard Foes, Galloway, George Giusti, James Hansen, Chuck Kuderna, Craig Pineo, Ken Smith, Willardson, Teresa Woodward, and Zermeno. Many posters from this era have only the last name of the artist, or no signatures at all. Not all of the posters, however, included images of Smokey Bear.

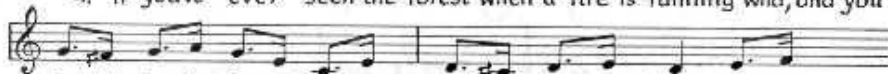


SMOKEY THE BEAR

By STEVE NELSON and JACK ROLLINS



1. With a Ranger's hat and shovel and a pair of dungar-ees you will
2. You can take a tip from Smokey that there's nothin' like a tree, cause they're
3. You can camp upon his doorstep and he'll make you feel at home, you can
4. If you've ever seen the forest when a fire is running wild, and you



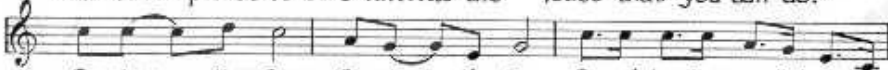
find him in the forest always sniffin' at the breeze. People good for kids to climb in and they're beaut-i-ful to see, you just run and hunt and ramble any - where you care to roam. He will love the things within it like a moth-er loves her child, then you



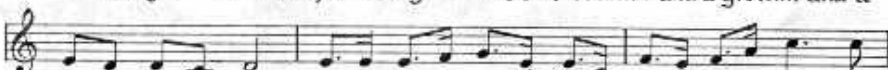
stop and pay at-ten-tion when he tells 'em to be-ware, 'cause have to look a-round you and you'll find it's not a joke, to let you take his hon-ey and pre - tend he's not so smart, but know why Smok-ey tells you when he sees you pass-ing through, "Re-



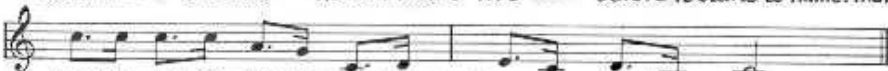
ev'-ry - bo-dy knows that he's the Fire Pre-ventin' Bear. see what you'd be mis-sin' if they all went up in smoke. don't you harm his trees for he's a Ran-ger in his heart. member...please be care-ful...its the least that you can do."



Smokey - the Bear, Smokey - the Bear. Prowlin' and a growlin' and a



sniffin' - the air. He can find a fire - before it starts to flame. That's



why they call him Smokey, that was how he got his name.

This song written under license of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture to Hill & Range Songs, Inc., and recorded, under license by RCA-Victor, Columbia, Decca, Peter Pan, & Golden Records. Copyright 1952 by Hill & Range Songs, Inc., New York, N. Y. International copyright secured. All rights reserved including the right of public performance for profit.

“Smokey the Bear” By Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins, Copyrighted 1952
Artwork by Rudolph Wendelin

According to an article that appeared in *The New York Times* (New York, New York) April 2, 2014 announcing his passing, Richard Black was born in Philadelphia on October 10, 1921. He attended Syracuse University before serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II. After the war he opened a studio in Dayton, Ohio. He had worked for Shell Oil, Frigidaire, and other companies when Proctor and Gamble hired him in the mid-1950s to create a character named Mr. Clean for a new household cleaner. He also painted portraits and landscapes. One of his landscapes with animals that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* caught the attention of someone in the Department of the Interior in 1956, and Black was recruited to paint Smokey Bear.



Richard Black
“Prevent Forest Fires”
Watercolor and Ink

According to an article that appeared in the *Lompoc Record* (Lompoc, California) on September 29, 2006 after his passing at age 80, Merv Corning was a self-taught artist born and raised in Santa Ana, California. He left high school to join the Merchant Marines during World War II. Early in his career he was commissioned to paint four watercolors depicting aerial combat in the First World War. This led to a collection of over 40 World War I aerial combat paintings. Corning eventually formed the corporation Studio Artist with other artists. He is best known for his aerial combat painting and his paintings for the National Football League.

Richard Foes worked for a time with Merv Corning at Studio Artists in San Francisco painting depictions of World War I aerial combat. He also worked in the animation department for Disney on several Winnie the Pooh animated shorts and collector plates.



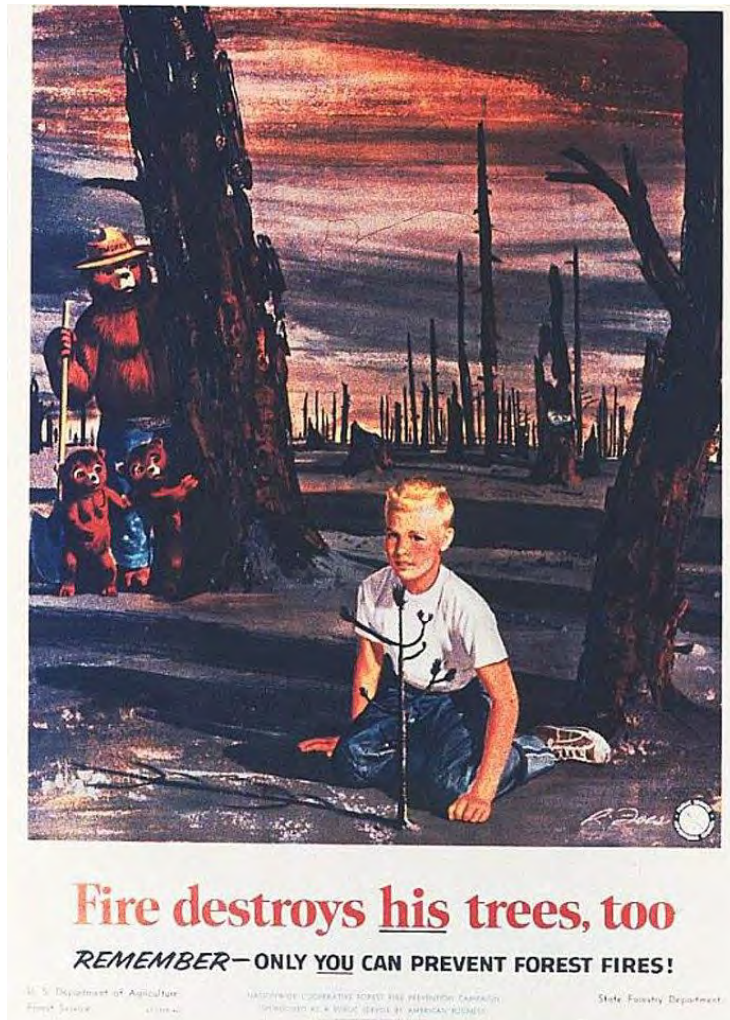
Merv Corning Smokey Poster, 1957



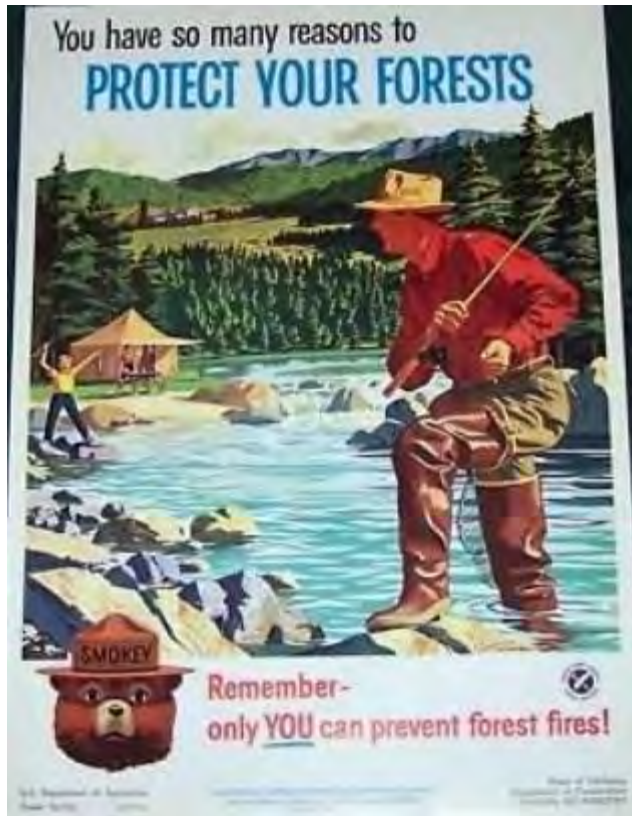
Merv Corning Smokey Poster, 1962



World War I aerial combat and NFL Coach Mike Ditka by Merv Corning.



Richard Foes Smokey Poster, 1957



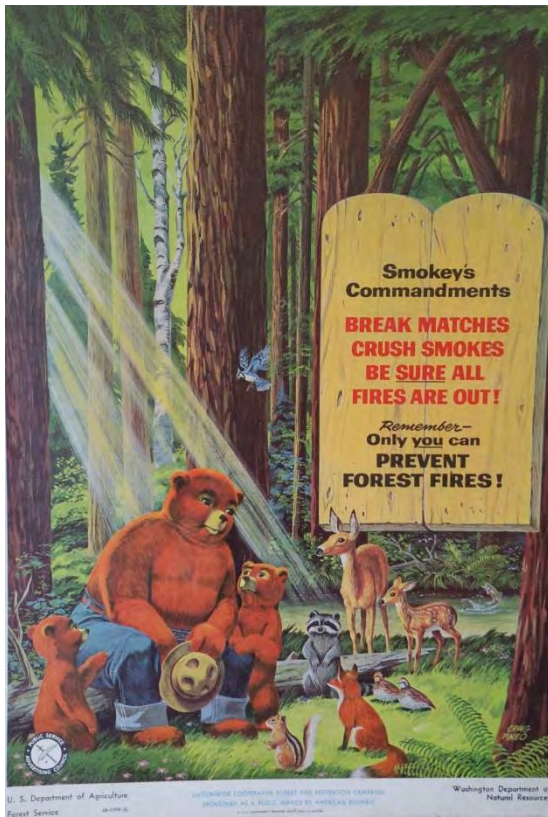
Richard Foes Smokey Poster, 1962

George Giusti was a graphic designer and illustrator born in 1908 in Milan, Italy of a Swiss father and Italian mother. He received his professional training at the Reale Accademia de Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. He immigrated to the United States in 1938 with his wife and young son, and spent the majority of his career in New York. As a freelance artist, Giusti designed posters for United States government agencies during World War II. He designed a poster for the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention program in 1946.



George Giusti's "Prevent Forest Fires" poster, 1946.

Craig Pineo is better known for his illustrations in children's books. His Smokey Bear posters were used in the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention program from the late 1950s to the early 1960s.



“Smokey’s Commandments”
Craig Pineo, 1957



“Smokey’s Debris Burning Rules”
Craig Pineo, 1959

Several sources give Chuck Kuderna credit for the way the “modern” Smokey Bear looks when he was involved with the 1965 campaign. Kuderna did Smokey Bear Posters in 1962 and 1965. Kuderna is better known for his artwork while employed for the Northrop Aircraft Incorporated in the 1950s.



This “Evolution of Smokey Bear” shows the changes in his image from the 1944 Smokey by Albert Staehle to the 1992 image by Rudolph Wendelin.

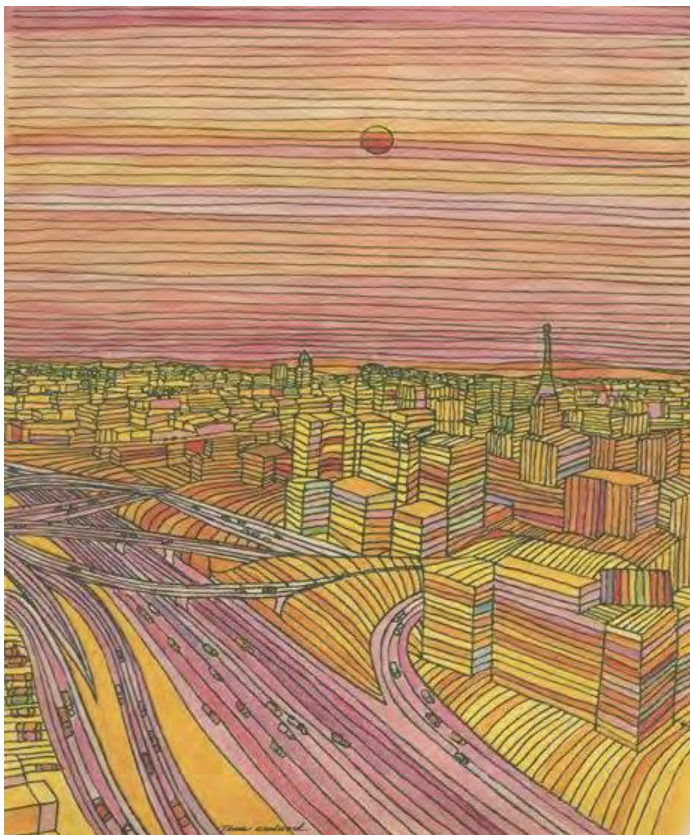


Chuck Kuderna illustrations for Northrop Aircraft, 1955 at left, and 1958 at right.

Teresa Woodward was born in 1932. By the 1960s, Teresa and her husband Tom Woodward were one of the top design teams in Los Angeles, California. Teresa Woodard illustrated childrens books and did the artwork on album covers for the Everly Brothers and other Warner Brother recording artists. Her graphic art has been compared to the art of Peter Max.



Teresa Woodward Smokey Bear Poster, 1972.



**“Los Angeles”
Teresa Woodward, 1967.**

Barry Nehr worked briefly in the Forest Service's Regional Office in Atlanta as Harry Rossoll's assistant before taking over as the Regional Illustrator when Rossoll retired. A brief biographical sketch of Barry Nehr was written by Mary Dugan, Jefferson Heritage Tree Council, and posted on his Facebook Page shortly after his passing on September 25, 2015. Additional information was given by his daughter, Amy Cross of Savannah, Georgia.

Barrion Duane Nehr was born on August 31, 1934 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He spent his childhood in the forests and fields, hunting and fishing. His love of the outdoors led him to attend the New York Ranger School in upstate New York. Upon graduation in 1960, he pursued a career in forestry, marking timber, building trails, and fighting forest fires. As a young man, he had exhibited a talent for drawing, and by his early teens, he was producing pencil and pen and ink sketches, always with a preference for wildlife. He also worked with oil paints, with an impressionistic style emphasizing color and light.

In the late 1960s, Barry was hired to paint background murals at the new Brasstown Bald visitor center on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest in Georgia. His illustrations depicting the history and nature scenes of northwest Georgia caught the eye of Harry Rossoll, who helped Barry get a job with the Forest Service as his assistant. When Harry Rossoll retired from the Forest Service in 1971, Barry Nehr became the Regional Illustrator.



Barry Nehr, United States Forest Service, Regional Illustrator, Southern Region, 1970s.

Barry Nehr's murals can be found in various locations across the Southern Region. A three-piece mural on canvas is in storage at the temporary supervisor's office in Jackson, Mississippi. His work can also be seen at the District Ranger's Office at the Pisgah Ranger District in North Carolina, and the Chattahoochee-Oconee's Supervisor's Office in Gainesville, Georgia.



One of the last projects Barry Nehr worked on, repairing the murals at the Pisgah Ranger District, May 2015.

In the Smokey Bear Files of Rudolph Wendelin at the Forest History Society, there is a Smokey Bear comic book illustrated by Barry Nehr entitled, "A Day in the Forest with Smokey." The comic book was published by the USDA Forest Service in 1972. Other Forest Service, Southern Region publications illustrated by Barry Nehr included "Southern Pine Nursery Handbook" in 1984, "Stream Habitat Improvement Handbook" in 1992, and "A Guide to the Care and Planting of Southern Pine Seedlings" revised in October 1996 from "Selecting and Planting Pine Seedlings" by David J. Moorehead (Cooperative Extension Service Bulletin 983, April 1988, Athens, Georgia).



Reverse image of illustration from "Selecting and Planting Pine Seedlings" 1988.

Barry Nehr retired from the Forest Service in 1989 after 20 years of service. He went to work for Southern Custom Exhibits in Anniston, Alabama and continued to paint background murals for various clients, including the Munford Elementary School in Munford, Alabama. While he lost many of his original paintings in a building fire in March of 2015, his surviving paintings can be found in galleries on Tybee Island and in Jasper, Georgia. More of his murals can be seen in state and national parks throughout the United States and Georgia, at the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, the Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge, and the Georgia Forestry Commission's mobile environmental classroom.



Murals by Barry Nehr in the cafeteria at the Munford Elementary School.

In addition to his Smokey Bear illustrations, Harry Rossoll also provided artwork on many other Forest Service projects. The illustrations in the 1949 “Trees, The Yearbook of Agriculture” were by Harry Rossoll, Rudolph Wendelin, Miss Leta Hughey, of the Washington Office who did mostly botanical illustrations, and Linn A. Forrest, who had worked in Region 6, the Pacific Northwest, from 1935 to 1946, and the late 1940s as the Region Architect in Alaska.

In the 1950s, Harry Rossoll co-authored and illustrated instructional booklets with researchers from the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. In 1954, he co-authored a 22-page booklet “How to Root and Graft Slash Pine” with Francois Mergen. The booklet contained 45 drawings. In 1955, Mergen, Rossoll, and K.B. Pomeroy authored a 14-page booklet “How to Control the Pollination of Slash and Longleaf Pine.” The booklet contained the latest techniques in true-to-life drawings. In 1958, Rossoll co-authored “Beetles in Your Pines?: How Good Cutting Practices and Management Stop Beetles from Killing Your Timber” with R. Joseph Kowal. Harry Rossoll also co-authored “Climbing Southern Pines Safely” in 1958 with E. Bayne Snyder. In 1959, Harry Rossoll illustrated J.S. McKnight’s “Protect and Manage Good Southern Hardwoods.”

In September of 1952, the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station in Asheville, North Carolina, was filming a documentary called the “Waters of Coweeta” in Macon County, North Carolina. The film was released in 1955 and was widely shown to teach people about watershed management. The models in the film were painted by Rudolph Wendelin.



Rudolph Wendelin painting a model for “Waters of Coweeta,” September 15, 1952.

In December of 1953, the Forest Service published a booklet entitled “Waters of Coweeta.” In the booklet, there is a photograph of the researchers standing around Rudolph Wendelin’s model of the watershed. While the booklet contains mostly photographs of the work being done by the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, there also a few illustrations, but no credit is shown for the artist. In 1957, the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station published a booklet entitled

“Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory” which contained many of the same photographs as the 1953 publication. The booklet was prepared by Dr. John D. Hewlett, of the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, and illustrated by Harry Rossoll.

On August 23, 1953, the *Boston Sunday Herald* (Boston, Massachusetts) contained an article from Hot Springs, Arkansas that a “new and attractive multi-color recreation tour guide map, featuring the scenic lake and mountain Ouachita country” was now available. The artwork of the map was by the “famous artist and cartoonist, Harry Rossoll, creator of the Smokey Bear cartoon series.” The map was a community project sponsored by the Ouachita National Forest, the Lions Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. The Civitan Club published the map.

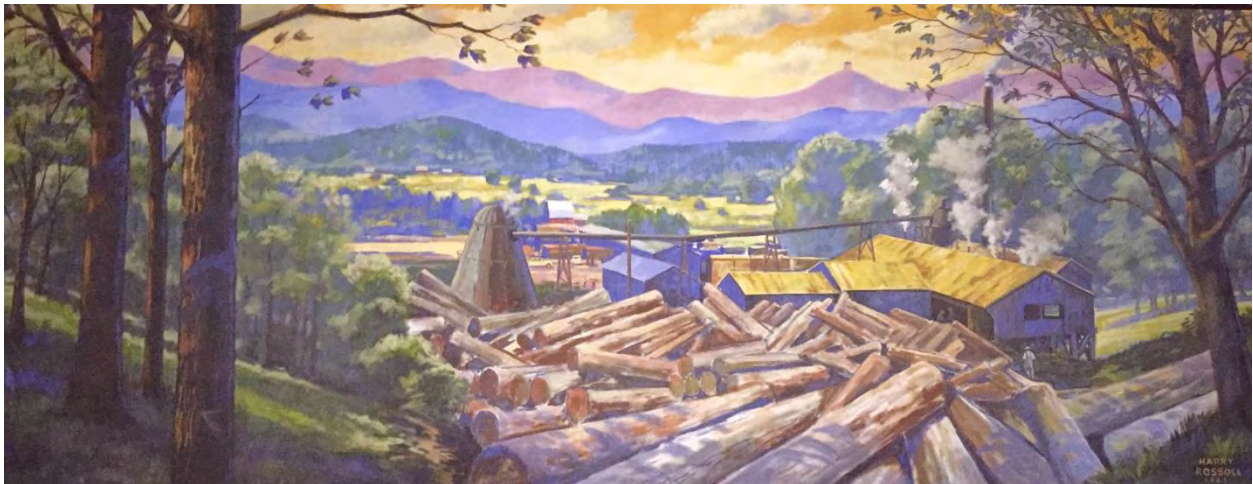
The March 4, 1959 edition of the *USDA Employee News Bulletin* reported that Harry Rossoll, of the Forest Service’s Region 8 Office in Atlanta, was in Washington, D.C. to meet with Seth Jackson, the Forest Service’s “safety man” Administrative Officer. Rossoll was assisting in the production of a Forest Service safety movie entitled “Safety for Sure.” According to the 1960 “Motions Pictures of the U.S. Department of Agriculture,” (Agriculture Handbook No. 14) “Safety for Sure” was a 16 mm color motion picture released in 1959. It was 10 ¾ minutes long. It was described in the handbook as:

A safety training film, designed for in-service use. Features a chalk talk by Forest Service artist Harry Rossoll. The film points out the SURE way to safety and the four key points to be taught on any job: size up the situation; use your Safety Code and follow instructions; protect your fellow workers; and establish an alternate plan. The positive points, if carried out, can prevent injury.

The decade of the 1960s saw a major expansion in recreation development throughout the National Forests. As new visitor centers, ranger offices, and other administrative buildings were being designed, Harry Rossoll was assigned the task of painting murals to decorate the interiors and add interpret artwork for the public. Two of his paintings dated 1963 are presently at the Brasstown Bald Visitors Center in Georgia. They are not original to the center as the Brasstown Bald facility was constructed in 1967, and Barry Nehr was hired to paint the original murals at the visitor center. According to Rachel Schneider, former public affairs specialist for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest, these paintings were move from the Supervisor’s Office in Gainesville, Georgia during a move to another building.

In October of 1964, the American Forestry Association and the North Carolina Forestry Association held a combined annual meeting at the Battery Park Hotel in Asheville, North Carolina. Among those attending the meeting were J.K. Vessey, Regional Forester from the Southern Region in Atlanta, Edward Cliff, Chief of the Forest Service, and George James, Regional Forester from the Eastern Region in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At the time of this meeting, Chief Cliff was delivering the remarks at the laying of the cornerstone of the visitor’s

center at the Cradle of Forestry on the Pisgah National Forest. Harry Rossoll's painting entitled "Spirit of Forestry" was placed on exhibit at the Battery Park Hotel later moved to the Cradle of Forestry.



Two Harry Rossoll oil on canvas paintings dated 1963, presently at the Brasstown Bald visitor's center.

Harry Rossoll's "Spirit of Forestry" features a toga-clad forestry student whose muscles would feel at home in a WPA poster, a Russian socialist realism poster, or a German propaganda poster from the 1930s. Art students in this country call this style "American Expressionism." He holds in one hand a stylize pine tree, in the other, a tablet of outdoor forestry knowledge. Watching over the forestry student from the clouds are the faces of Theodore Roosevelt, president when the Forest Service was created in 1905; Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the Forest Service; Cornelius Vanderbilt in front of Biltmore; and Dr. Carl Schenck in front of one of the forestry lodges.



“Spirit of Forestry” on exhibit at the Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, North Carolina, October 1964.

L to R: J.K. Vessey, Regional Forester, Atlanta; Edward Cliff, FS Chief; Harry Rossoll, Artist; George James, Regional Forester, Milwaukee

A good portion of the funding for the developed recreation areas on the National Forests during the 1960s came from the Accelerated Public Works Act, signed into law by President Kennedy on September 14, 1962. The purpose of the Act was “to initiate and accelerate Federal public works projects and to provide Federal assistance for a similar expansion of public works to relieve unemployment and spur economic expansion in those areas of the country which have failed to share fully in the economic gains of the recovery from the 1960-61 recession.”

On May 13, 1965, *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina) reported that the dedication ceremonies for the Woods Ferry Recreation Area on the Broad River in Chester County had been set for May 16th. John A. Baker, assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture was to be the principal speaker. He was to be introduced by J. Bratten Davis, chairman of the State Development Board. Others on the program included T.C. Berry, president of the Chester County Board of Commerce and Development; State Senator Paul Hemphill, Jr., of Chester County; and J.K. Vessey, Regional Forester of the U.S. Forest Service.

The Woods Ferry Recreation Area had been under construction for the past year, and was the newest facility of the National Forests in South Carolina. It had been designed to appeal to campers, hikers, boating enthusiasts, and picnickers. The recreation area had been first visualized in 1960 when a long range recreation survey was conducted on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. The area along the Broad River had both scenic attractions as well as historic significance. In early 1963, the Accelerated Public Works Program made funding available to Chester County, and Forest Service engineers, landscape architects and recreational specialists began preparing plans to develop the site into a major recreational area.

The project gave construction work to over 180 men from Chester County. In addition, contractors from all over the State of South Carolina built roads and worked on the improvements. The recreation area was completed in late 1964, at a cost of \$250,000 including access roads. The recreation area contained 28 individual camp sites; two group campgrounds; 57 picnic tables; two picnic shelters; one boat launching ramp; one boat dock; showers and toilets. It was the largest single recreation area on the National Forests in South Carolina.

On the Enoree Division of the Sumter National Forest there are oil paintings on composite board done by Harry Rossoll commemorating the dedication of the Woods Ferry Recreation Area dated 1965. The larger of the two paintings, 88 inches by 122 inches, originally was located at the Tyger Ranger District Station in Union, South Carolina. The smaller piece, 34 inches by 41 inches, was located at the Enoree District Ranger Station. The districts were later combined.



The larger painting by Harry Rossoll for the dedication of the Woods Ferry Recreation Area, 1965. Presently at the Enoree Division of the Sumter National Forest.



The smaller oil on composite board painting for the Woods Ferry Recreation Area dedication, dated 1965.

In 1964, work began on construction of a dam to create Coleman Lake on the Shoal Creek Ranger District of the Talladega National Forest in Alabama. The project was funded through the Accelerated Public Works Act. While the lake was opened to the public for fishing in June of 1966, development of the proposed campground was delayed. Construction of the camping facilities did not begin until August of 1968 and not completed for dedication until August of 1970.

An oil on canvas painting by Harry Rossoll is at the Supervisors Office for the National Forests in Alabama in Montgomery. The painting, measuring 4 ½ feet by 5 ½ feet, is dated 1966. Perhaps due to the delays in the construction of the campground, the painting does not have “Coleman Lake Campground” similar to the painting Rossoll did for Woods Ferry, but the Coleman Lake Campground was the only recreation project under construction in the National Forests at the time that would have mountains in the background of the lake. The Corinth Recreation Area on Lake Lewis Smith on the Bankhead National Forest was in operation by 1966, with 18 family units and a picnic shelter, and another 40 family units and a boat launch were under construction by 1967, but there are no mountains at Lake Lewis Smith such as those shown in the painting.



Harry Rossoll oil on canvas painting, dated 1966, thought to be Coleman Lake on the Shoal Creek Ranger District of the Talladega National Forest. Painting located at the Supervisor’s Office in Montgomery, Alabama.

In 1970, Harry Rossoll was commissioned to paint a mural for the School of Forestry at the Stephen F. Austin State University. The painting was to be seven feet high by 14 feet wide, and to be painted on the wall of the new forestry classroom. The mural was to depict the various stages of professional forestry. According to an article that appeared in *The Daily Sentinel and Redland Herald* (Nacogdoches, Texas) on September 30, 1970, the mural was to be completed before the dedication of the new forestry building on October 23rd.



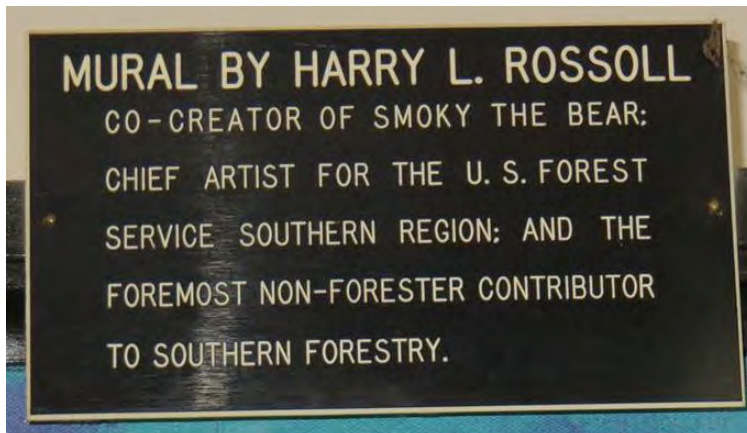
Dr. Laurence C. Walker, dean of the forestry school, and Miss Nancy King, administrative secretary, with a picture of Harry Rossoll's mural, September 1970. (Photo courtesy of Nancy King Pase.)



Harry Rossoll painting the mural at the School of Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State University, 1970. (Photo courtesy of Nancy King Pase.)



Harry Rossoll's mural at the School of Forestry, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. (Photo courtesy of Nancy King Pase.)



Close-up of the sign above the mural. (Photo courtesy of Nancy King Pase.)

Harry Rossoll retired from the Forest Service in 1971. On May 4, 1975, *The Tuscaloosa News* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama) reported that Harry was the guest speaker at the 77th Convocation of Auburn University Forestry Students and Faculty. In the late 1970s, Harry began painting murals for the Heritage Forest Center at Beavers Bend State Park in McCurtain County, Oklahoma. According to the article written by Jay Grelen in August 1999, Harry traveled from Atlanta to look at the project. He originally thought the project would take two years to complete. Over the next 12 years Harry painted 14 murals which were seven-foot by 21-foot dioramas depicting Oklahoma's forests from the age of dinosaurs to the modern day. He painted the murals in Atlanta and mailed the rolled canvases to Oklahoma.



One of the 14 murals painted by Harry Rossoll at the Heritage Forest Center, Beavers Bend State Park, Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

On May 29, 1984, *The Dispatch* (Lexington, North Carolina) reported that Harry Rossoll had been awarded the “Smokey Award” at a ceremony at the Forest Service office in Atlanta. Harry Rossoll had retired from the Forest Service 13 years earlier after working for the agency for 35 years. The nine-inch silver Smokey Award marked his career in fire prevention.

On June 15, 1990, *The Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) reported that the last of the 14 murals depicting Oklahoma’s historical and cultural forest heritage was being dedicated at the Forest Heritage Center in Broken Bow. This had been a “labor of love” for Harry Rossoll, artist and illustrator, who had taken 13 years to complete. Rossoll was to be honored during a dedication and banquet ceremony.

The Fall of 1992 issue of the *Georgia Forestry* magazine (No. 3, Vol. 45) reported that Harry Rossoll had donated an urban forestry painting to the Georgia Forestry Museum in Macon, Georgia for the Georgia Forestry Commission. It was a five-foot by 3½-foot acrylic painting depicting an urban forestry scene with the Atlanta skyline in the background. At the time of this

project, Harry was working out of a private studio in Atlanta. One of his specialties at this time was painting scenes of hunting dogs. At age 82, Harry was also serving as art director of the *Forest Farmer* magazine, a publication of the Forest Farmers Association in Atlanta, and was working on numerous freelance projects.



Harry Rossoll’s “Urban Forester,” Georgia Forestry Museum, Macon, Georgia, 1992.

During the time that Harry Rossoll was working on the murals for the Heritage Forest Center in Oklahoma, he became friends with Quintus Herron, a legendary forester in McCurtain County and co-director of the Forest Heritage Center. According to Jay Grelen, Herron was “looking for a positive approach to counter the environmentalists’ message that to cut a tree is a sin.” From the conversations between Herron and Rossoll, another bear was born: “T. Bear.”

The Summer of 1993 issue of the *Georgia Forestry* magazine (No. 2, Vol. 46) contained an article by Bill Edwards entitled “New Bear Arriving.” At this point in time, Harry Rossoll was 83 years old and had been retired from the Forest Service for 22 years, but he “remained vitally interested in forestry” as he continued to work out of his private studio in Atlanta. The creation

of “T. Bear” (or Tree Bear) had begun in 1990 when Harry and Quintus Herron, board chairman of the Oklahoma Forest Heritage Center, came up with the idea to “establish a media-ready representative for the rights of private landowners that would equal Smokey’s effectiveness in fire prevention.” “Good things come from trees” was T. Bear’s motto. He served to not only protect forestland owner rights but to educate the public and offer an accurate account of forestry objectives and concerns. Tree harvesting and wood products were completely compatible with good stewardship of the land.

According to Harry Rossoll, just as with the early days of Smokey Bear fifty years earlier, other animals had been considered, but the image of a bear was settled on because it was more conducive to being humanized. Various advisors suggested ideas for the new bear. Rossoll’s first version of T. Bear looked like a possum in overalls, clomping around in brogan-type shoes. He eventually became more humanized and intelligent in appearance with glasses. He carried a dibble bar (a tool for planting trees), and wore a long-billed baseball cap. “Sort of a congenial clean-cut character that you would trust to roam your woodlands and give you the right advice,” Rossoll was quoted to have said. T. Bear appealed to both children and adults.



Harry Rossoll with T. Bear.

In the late 1990s, Harry Rossoll’s niece, June A. Bradlaw, gathered Harry’s drawings of T. Bear and wrote a children’s book entitled “Tree Bear’s Adventures in Learning.” Bradlaw was a microbiologist with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition who research led to test-tube alternatives to using animals in laboratory testing. The book was published in 2000.

Posthumous Postscripts

Harry Rossoll died on February 25, 1999. In the article written by Jay Grelen in August of 1999 for *The Daily Oklahoman*, when Harry Rossoll was asked about getting the credit for the creation of Smokey Bear, Rossoll would become irritated, but he never became bitter. Myrna Oliver, staff writer for *The Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California) wrote an article about Harry on March 3, 1999, referring to him as the “Creator of Smokey Bear.” This article was published in many newspapers in the following days. Interestingly, in the Oliver article, Harry Rossoll stated in 1993 that the highpoint in his career were the murals at the Oklahoma Forest Heritage Center. “This creation of my murals in Oklahoma Forest Heritage Center is my glory in my life. I don’t care whether I die now because I’ve reached the pinnacle of my life.”

On March 23, 1999, the Georgia House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring Harry Rossoll and regretting his passing. The resolution stated, “Harry Rossoll was an award winning illustrator and artist whose most famous creation is Smokey Bear.” “Mr. Rossoll created Smokey Bear in 1944 as a way to promote the critically important message of forest fire prevention...” “One of Georgia’s most talented citizens, Mr. Rossoll is deserving of recognition and honor in light of his immeasurable contributions to the preservation of nature and the joy he brought to children and adults alike with his art, so it is only fitting and proper that he be remembered with gratitude by all Georgians.”

Rudolph Wendelin was seriously injured in an automobile accident on August 18, 2000, and died on August 31, 2000. Richard Pearson, writer for the Washington Post, wrote an article shortly after death of Wendelin. The headline read, “Artist who created Smokey Bear Icon.” However, in the actual article, Pearson reported that Wendelin was “the man in charge of Smokey Bear” after the Second World War, and under Wendelin’s guidance, Smokey Bear had undergone several changes in appearance.

At the time of the 50th anniversary of Smokey Bear in 1994, Representative Carrie P. Meek, (D) Florida, introduced into the Congressional Record a tribute to Albert Staehle, “Creator of Smokey Bear.” Staehle had passed away in 1975. Representative Meeks represented the 17th Congressional District in Florida, the home of Marjory Staehle, Albert’s widow. According to the tribute, “The original Smokey Bear was born from the imagination and pen of the late Albert Staehle, considered America’s greatest animal illustrator.”

Rossoll, Wendelin, Staehle. These three men all played a vital role in the creation and development of the Forest Service’s most iconic image, and a host of other’s contributed their talents, pens, and brushes to the cause. Sadly, after the mid-1970s, the Smokey posters are rarely signed. By that point in time however, the image of Smokey Bear was well established.