

Mr. Bean's Boot

and Other Tall Tales

By Bud Simpson

Other books by Bud Simpson

BIO OF MY EARLY LIFE

The Cove

NOVELS:

The Reluctant Guest

A Dark Place

A Missing Piece of Sky

Junkyard Dogs

Ninth Moon

ANTHOLOGY:

Bud Simpson's Olio Folio

NATURE:

Nature's Way: Birds of the Hills: Vol.1

Nature's Way: Birds of the Hills: Vol. 2

Nature's Way (The Great Blue Heron)

Nature's Way: Vol. 2 (Great Egret)

Nature's Way: The Mute Swans of Lake Logan

Mr. Bean's Boot

and Other Tall Tales

By Bud Simpson



All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing by the copyright owner.

Copyright 2023 By Bud Simpson

ISBN: 978-1-62249-xxx-x

Published by:
The Education Publisher, Inc.
Biblio Publishing
BiblioPublishing.com

This book is dedicated to my loving and much-loved wife,
Margo Elizabeth Simpson (1936-2022) and to my daughter,
Denise Marie Simpson, without whom I might be in a
mental institution right now instead of writing
this fascinating new book.

Furthermore, and importantly, it is dedicated to the memory of a
man named Doc. I either never knew his last name or it has slipped through
one of the many holes in my decreasing memory. Plus, to Dennis Leavitt,
another man who took time out of his life to teach me a skill that has
made the memories recalled within these pages more enjoyable and
enabled me to make a bit more money throughout my lifetime.
And also, to Guy LaChance, known better by his sobriquet,
Guy Lucky, who, without any hesitation, allowed me to
become a handsewer at Viner Bros. Shoes in the
"good old days."

PART ONE

WHO AM I ?

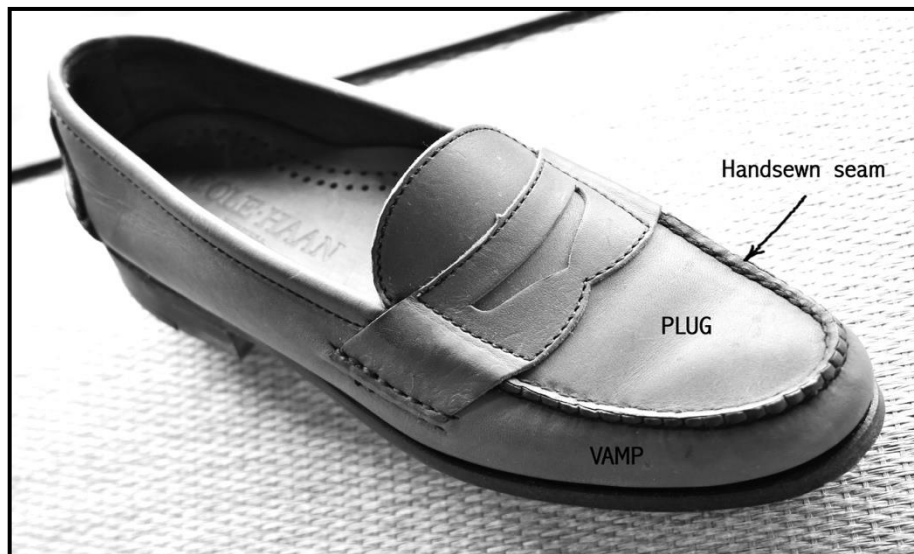
INTRODUCTION:

Before I start on this journey of words, I should give you my bona fides so you won't get the wrong impression of what I am trying to do by writing this book. This is about a boot. A specific boot. The famous . . . no . . . *legendary*, L.L. Bean hunting boot. This boot was the cornerstone of a small company that started in the basement of its founder's brother and has grown into an international company that is worth either millions or billions of dollars, depending on whom you ask or what you read.

To this day, Mr. Bean's company has a fantastic reputation for dealing honestly with its customers and standing behind its quality products. These characteristics are sadly lacking in most of this world I find myself still in after 88 years of living.

I was born in Brewer, Maine in 1934, at the height of the Great Depression. It made no difference to my family. When you are born into poverty, a depression causes not much of a change in your life. But rather than go into my early years, I'll refer to a book I wrote about it in 2010, *The Cove*.

Besides, this is a book about a boot, not about Bud Simpson. However, I'll have to speak about myself to show you that I am somewhat qualified to speak about this subject at all. My shoemaking expertise began when I took my first real job. It was at the Viner Brothers Shoe Factory on Hancock Street in Bangor, Maine.



Me being totally unprepared to be a shoemaker, they (unlike today) wouldn't hire me as the manager. I had to start at rock bottom. I was a last boy. This job was for me to read the work tag, find 12 pairs of the right size lasts from the bins and put them on a rack with a case of the correct leather vamps and plugs so the handsewers could sew the plugs to the vamps. (Lasts are wooden or plastic forms that the shoe is built around. A vamp is the leather body of the shoe or moccasin. The plug is the part of the shoe that fits directly over the top of the instep and toes.) *see photo above.*



The above photo is of a last. These are the solid forms around which a shoe or boot is made. They are made from wood, or more commonly now, plastic. This one is an old wooden last which, I presume, was one similar to the kind used to make the handsewn shoe shown on the previous page. I made that assumption because of all the tack holes on toe area of the last where vamp and plug would be located after being tacked to the last for sewing. I made that shoe many years ago.

Now, back to my bona fides. After working at the Viner factory for a time, I noticed that some workers had more prestige and made more money than my job offered. I inquired around and found that the cutters and handsewers were much better paid than me. I didn't think cutting was a job I might enjoy, but handsewing looked like a job requiring skill and might give a lot of satisfaction to the sewer.

One day I asked one of the better sewers, Dennis Leavitt, if there was any way I could be taught how to sew that seam on a shoe. He said that the first thing I should do was to spend as much time watching the good sewers, he named a few, and observe closely (and ask questions) about how they sewed their shoes. I did this for about a week before I approached Dennis again with the same query.

He agreed to teach me after eating his lunch each day. I always ate in a hurry to be sure there might be enough time left to learn the trade. We found enough old vamps and plugs that were discarded to begin the process. He showed me all the correct ways to sew these shoes and I caught on very quickly. After about a month or so, He let me sew on his cases of shoes at noontime. One day the foreman, Guy LaChance, (Guy Lucky) was standing there talking to Dennis as I came for my lesson.