



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

NOVEMBER 2017

Remembering the Tallest Men in the World

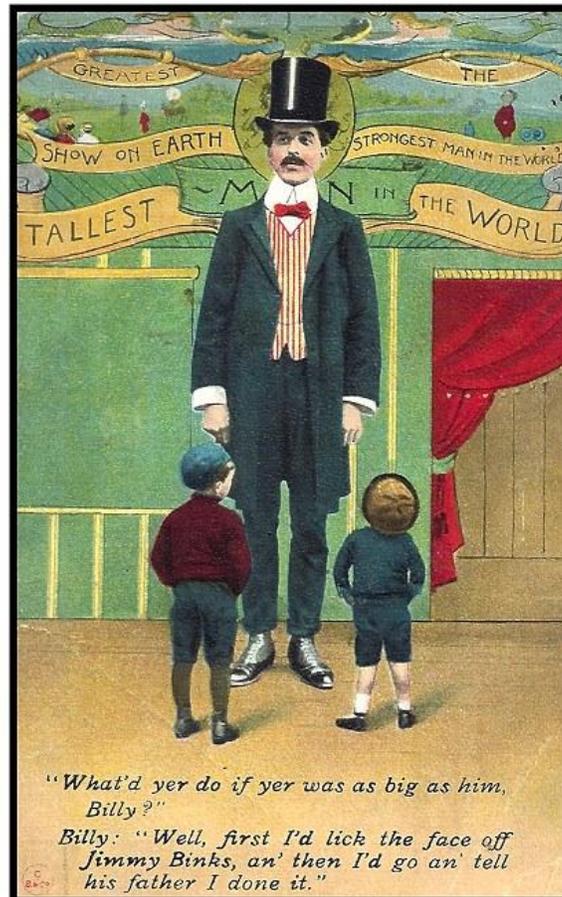


Photo courtesy of Stephen Kenney.

◆ Remembering the Tallest Men in the World – see page 3.

WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

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Sponsored by: **The Salem Numismatic Society**

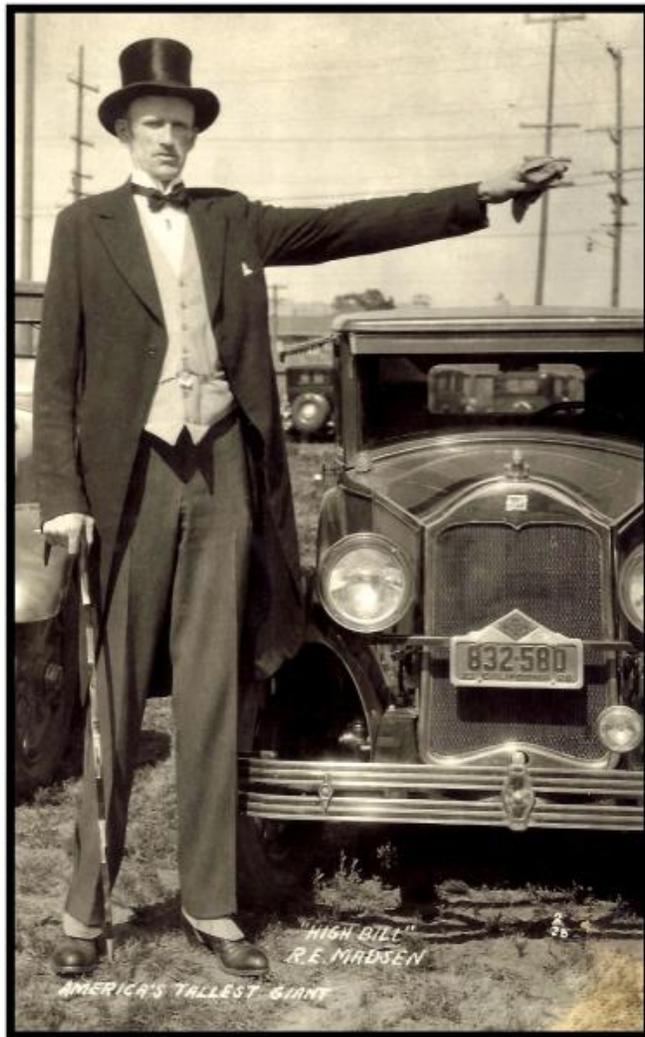
For information: Contact Danny B. at: 503-588-8162

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www.oregoncoinclubs.org

(paid advertisement)

America's Tallest Giant High Bill Madsen aka Tex Madsen



Ralph Madsen was born Ralph Earl Madsen on April 19 1897, in Norfolk, Nebraska and he died on November 26, 1948 in Norfolk, Nebraska. He was not from Texas as his nicknames and stories suggest. He had several nicknames including: High Bill Madsen, Tex Madsen, Sky High Madsen, Sky Hi, Big Boy, Atta Boy and Mr. Longfellow. At twenty-four years, his height was 7 feet 6 inches and he weighed 228 pounds. His mother and father, two sisters and a brother were all of medium height; his father was about six feet, two inches and the others were five feet, eight inches.

Ralph Madsen wore a size nine shoe, his hands were of an average size. He spent most of his life on a ranch and a greater part of it in the saddle. On the ranch, he acquired veterinary skills and was an authority on horses, sheep, cows and pigs.

Madsen eventually traveled to every state in the union as well as Mexico and Canada, always accompanied by his beloved miniature horse and his manager Sam Houston. It was Houston who promoted Ralph as a Texas native.

According to the following article in the "New York Times" of September 18, 1919:

TALL TEXAN STOPS TRAFFIC. *Ralph Madsen, 7 Feet 6, Attracts Big Crowd in Times Square. Ralph E. Madsen, the Texas Giant, made his first appearance in New York yesterday and succeeded in tying up traffic wherever he went. Madsen is 22 years old and a native of Ranger, Texas.*

His first Broadway appearance was made shortly after noon in Times Square, and so great was the crowd which gathered to see him that the traffic policeman asked him either to sit down or move on. Madsen moved and the crowd followed. The giant was a motion picture actor, and he visited the Eastern cities to promote the showing of his films. He called on President Wilson a few weeks ago in Washington.



Madsen also traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1919, and he was photographed shaking hands with Senator Morris Sheppard on the steps of the Capitol. He had been exhibited in a range of sideshows and fairs. Ralph also appeared in three films in Hollywood, playing a giant each time. A good natured man, who was described as "laughing with the world," he was quoted as saying, "we don't have to die to go to heaven, we can enjoy this world, we are not so sure of the next."

During World War I, Ralph attempted to enlist in both the U.S. and Canada but was turned down. The military authorities believed he would be too tall for the trenches and would make an easy target. In 1932, Madsen married Verne Marie Rice, a more typical five feet, five inches tall. Ralph died in Nebraska in 1948 at the age of 51.

The World's Tallest Man

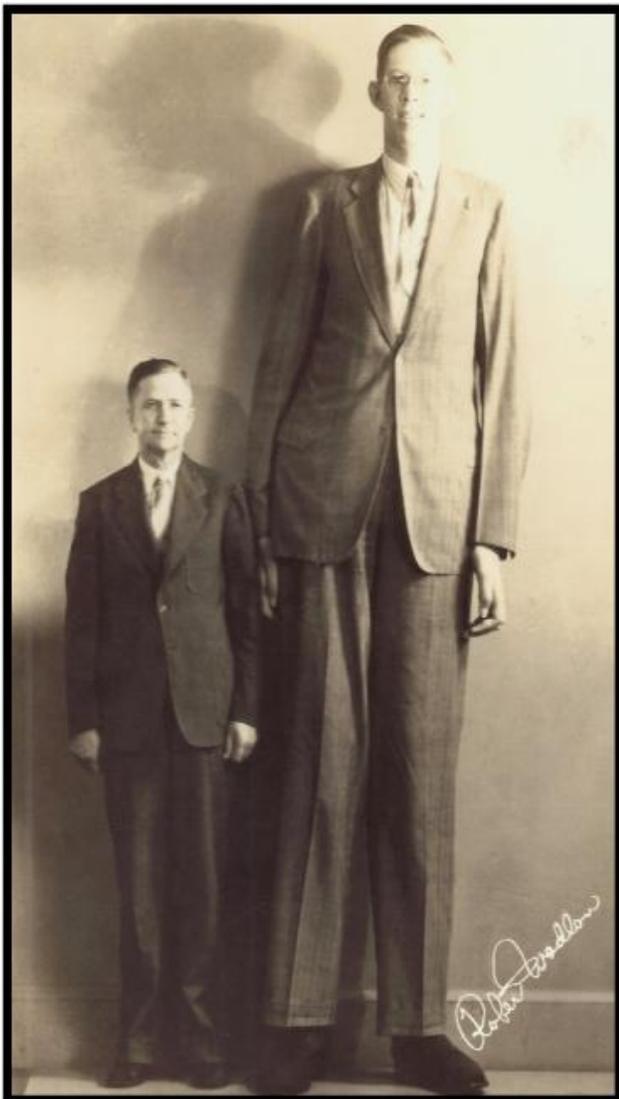


Photo courtesy of Stephen Kenney

– Robert Wadlow

Robert Pershing Wadlow -- also known as the "Alton Giant" and the "Giant of Illinois," was an American who became famous as the tallest person ever in human recorded history for whom there is irrefutable evidence. He was born in Alton, Illinois on February 22, 1918, the oldest of five children. He was a normal-size baby, but soon his perky pituitary gland triggered abnormal growth.

Robert Wadlow with his father, Harold Wadlow, who was five feet, eleven and a half inches tall.

He was taller than his father by the age of eight and in elementary school, they had to make a special desk for him due to his size.

At the age of 13, already seven-foot-four, he was proclaimed the world's biggest Boy Scout. And he kept getting bigger.

By the time he graduated from Alton High School in 1936, he was eight feet, four inches tall.

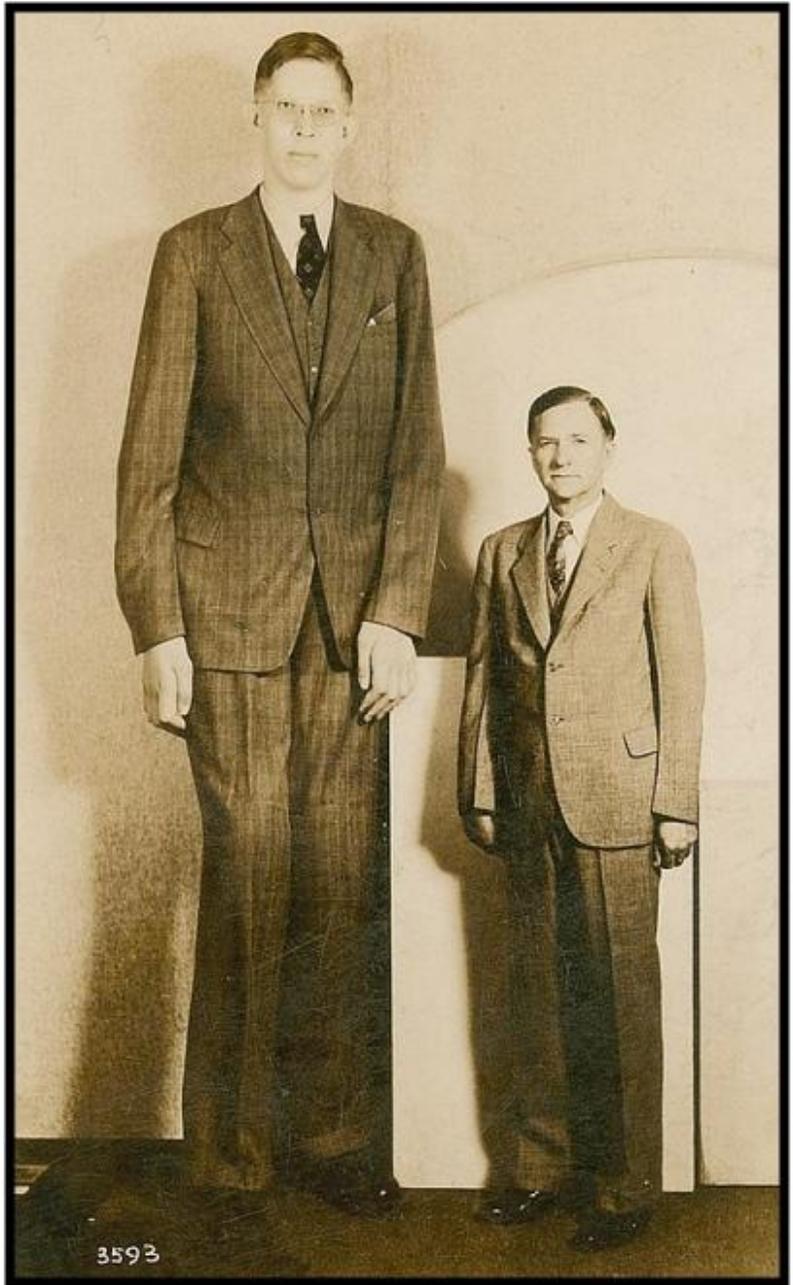
After graduating, he enrolled in Shurtleff College with the intention of studying law.

Also after graduation from high school, Wadlow began his U.S. Tour with the Ringling Brothers Circus in 1936 and he became a celebrity.

In 1938, Wadlow traveled the country as a spokesman for the International Shoe Company and they provided shoes for him free of charge. As part of the promotion, he'd leave behind his own shoes for display. As he got older and taller, he required leg braces to walk and had little feeling in his legs and feet.

In 1940, he marched in a July 4 Parade and got an infected blister from a faulty foot brace that irritated his ankle. Wadlow died in his sleep 11 days later on July 15, 1940. Twelve men were needed to carry him to his final rest. Wadlow's grave lies in his hometown, at nearby Upper Alton Cemetery.

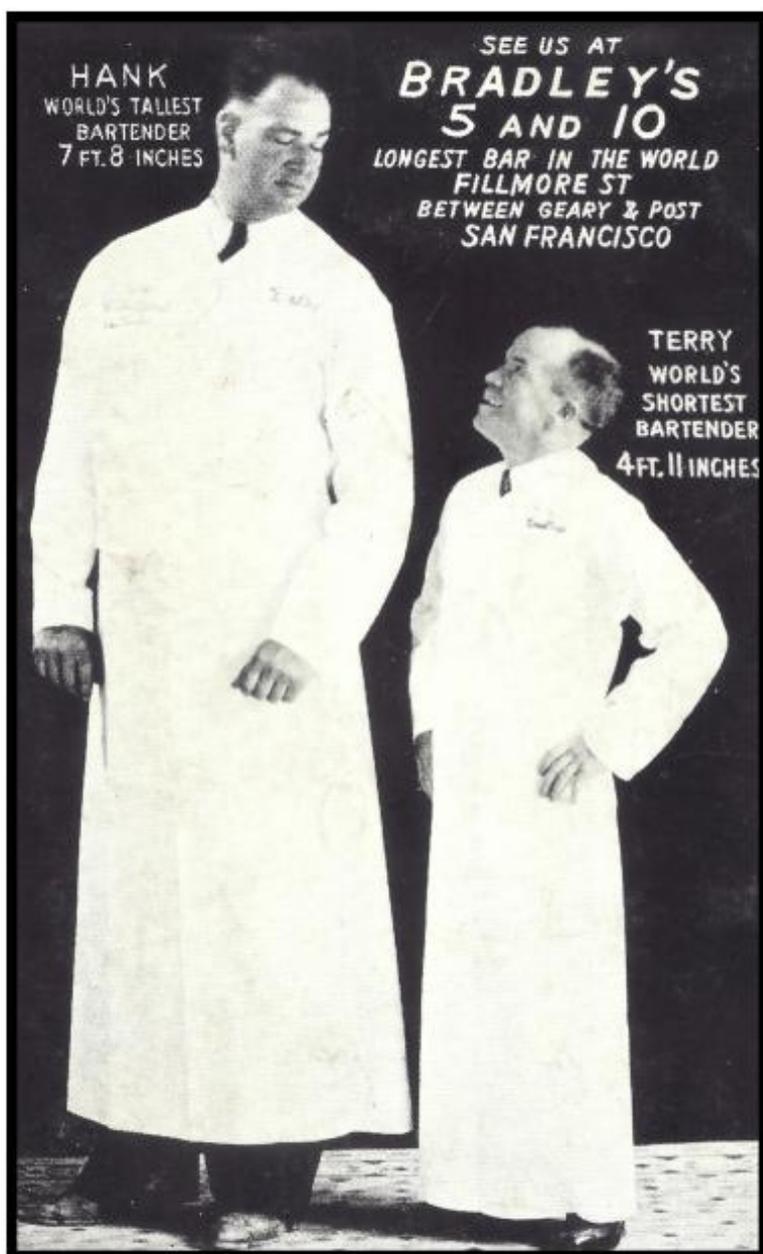
One year before his death, Wadlow grew taller than the man who previously held the distinction of being the world's tallest man, American John Rogan (1868-1905), who was eight feet, eight inches tall. Upon his death at age 22, the coroner declared Wadlow to be 8 feet 11 inches in height and he weighed 490 pounds.



Wadlow's great size and his continued growth in adulthood were due to hyperplasia of his pituitary gland, which results in an abnormally high level of human growth hormone. He showed no indication of an end to his growth even at the time of his death.

On October 20, 1985, a life-size bronze statue of Wadlow, sculpted by local artist Ned Giberson, was unveiled on the grounds of SIU Dental School in Alton (Wadlow had attended classes there), offering mute inspiration to those who dare to dream tall dreams.

Tallest and Shortest Bartenders



Bradley's 5 and 10 on Fillmore Street in San Francisco boasted that they had the longest bar in the world in the 1930s.

They promoted Hank as the tallest bartender in the world at seven feet, eight inches and Terry as the shortest bartender at four feet, eleven inches.



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