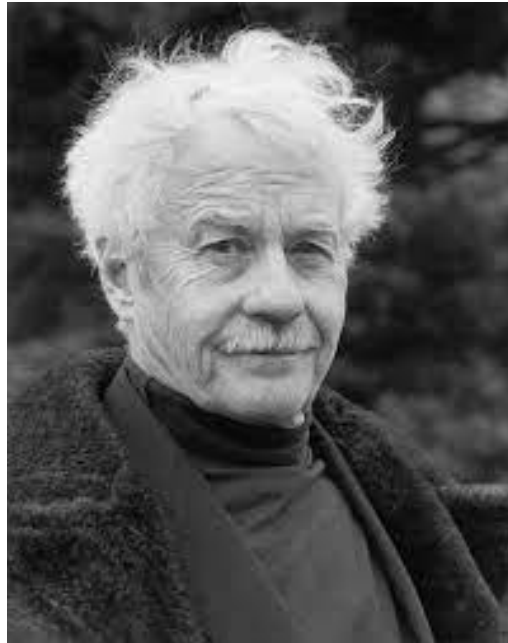


W.O. Mitchell

By: Spencer Stewart

When William Ormond Mitchell was born on March 13th, 1914 in



Weyburn, SK, little did his parents know that little baby would soon become one of the greatest Canadian authors of all time. When young William was only seven years old his father passed away which was an influence in writing his first book *Who Has Seen The Wind* (published 1947). Let's skip to when W.O. was twelve, he had contracted bovine tuberculosis in his wrist and was pulled from school. When he had days to himself he would walk across the Saskatchewan prairies marveling at the nature around him. To try to cure his wrist his family moved to Florida.

Thankfully, three years later the disease was cured and W.O. returned to Canada and started to study philosophy at the University of Manitoba and then took two years of classes at the University of Washington in Seattle. Soon after he moved to Alberta and got a job handing out newspapers in Edmonton and he even did a clown act for a local carnival. Meanwhile in Edmonton he met his wife Merna Hirtle who he married two years later. He moved to Calgary and studied to get his teaching degree. In 1945 after teaching for two years he and Merna moved to High River, Alberta where they raised their three children, Orm, Willa and Hugh.

He published his first book *Who Has Seen The Wind* two years later. In 1948 he started working in Toronto as the fiction editor of the magazine *MacLean's* where he started to write the *Jake and the Kid* radio series

which ran for six years, from 1950 to 1956. In 1961 he published a book version of the radio series *Jake and the Kid*. Then in 1968 he moved to Calgary where he taught a class on creative writing for the University of Calgary. In 1962 and 1990 W.O. won the Stephen Leacock award for humor writing, in 1973 he was made an officer of the Order of Canada and in the same year he published his book *The Vanishing Point*. A few years later he published *How I Spent My Summer Vacation* which is the sequel to *Jake and the Kid*. He was later named to the Queen's Privy Counsel in 1993. Sadly he passed away on February 25th 1998 at the age of 83 due to prostate cancer, his wife Merna died a few months later on May 12th, 1998.

Similarities And How He Inspires Me

I share connections with W.O. Mitchell because I also like to write stories and share them with my friends and family. W.O. Mitchell inspires me to become a better writer because he has overcome so much and the world loved his books. Other similarities I share with W.O. Mitchell are that we both have roots in Saskatchewan, both of my parents were born in Saskatchewan and my aunt and uncle in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I am inspired because he was born in a time without the advances in medicine we have now and he survived a disease that killed thousands of people still amazes me. Another thing that inspires me about him is that he started out as just a normal person on the streets of Edmonton selling newspapers and doing a clown act and now he is one of the most well known canadian authors. He made an impact on his community and everyone who knew him. He was an inspiring canadian and I strive to be more like him.

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