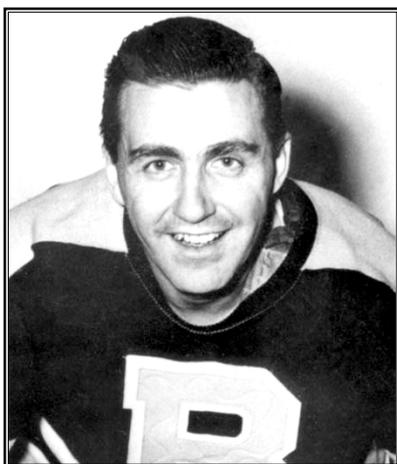


SUGAR JIM HENRY

A Remembrance

By Ed Sweeney



Samuel James "Sugar Jim" Henry passed away in Winnipeg on January 21, 2004 at the age of 83. Shortly before he died, Ed Sweeney of Winnipeg wrote this article for the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame newsletter.

“Sugar Jim” Henry played with the New York Rangers, Chicago Black Hawks and Boston Bruins between 1941 and 1955. He posted 27 shutouts and a 2.87 goals-against average in 406 NHL games. The Winnipeg native received his nickname as a child from a neighbor of the Henry family, because he was always being caught with his finger in their sugar bowl.

Jim Henry played in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League with the Brandon Elks, Western Canada finalists for the Abbott Cup in 1939. In the 1940–41 season he led the Regina Rangers to the senior hockey crown of Canada and the Allan Cup. Henry turned pro on October 28, 1941, signing with the New York Rangers and backstopping the club to first place overall in his rookie season.

Henry served in the Canadian military during World War II and helped the Ottawa Commandos win the 1943

Allan Cup. When the war ended, Jim returned to the Rangers in 1945 and shared the goaltending duties with good pal Chuck Rayner. The two goalies later became partners and operated a tourist lodge, Hockey Haven, near Kenora for over 20 years.

Jim was traded by New York to Chicago for Emile Francis on October 7, 1948 and played all 60 games for the Black Hawks that season. After being traded by Chicago to Detroit, Henry toiled in the minors for two years before being sold to Boston on September 28, 1951. He proved his skeptics wrong in the 1951–52 campaign with the Bruins as he enjoyed an outstanding season, posting a 2.51 average with seven shutouts. He also played in the 1952 All-Star Game, was selected to the NHL Second All-Star Team, and finished third in MVP voting for the Hart Trophy behind Gordie Howe and Elmer Lach. In his first three seasons in Boston, Henry never missed a game, but his Stanley Cup dream came up short in 1953 when Elmer Lach beat him in overtime for a 1–0 win that gave the Canadiens the series. Of course, he is best remembered for a goal Maurice Richard scored against him in the 1952 semifinals.

“It was a terrific goal,” Jim remembered. “One of the better goals ever scored on me.” The goal led to the famous photograph of Henry and Richard shaking hands after the series.

Jim Henry’s NHL career ended with an injury suffered when he was hit below the eye by a shot from Montreal Canadiens forward Baldy MacKay during a 1955 playoff game. Henry finished the double overtime game, then underwent a three-hour operation. He went into coaching after the injury, but also continued to play, finishing a long hockey career in 1960 while playing with the St. Paul Saints and the senior Winnipeg Maroons. Certainly one of the game’s great guys, “Sugar Jim” still resides in Winnipeg. When he isn’t appearing at a card show, he can be seen at local hockey functions with his good friend Bobby Chrystal.