



Many of us living today will bridge the 20th and 21st centuries. My father's life bracketed the 19th and 20th. His fourscore years witnessed profound events which figured and shaped what we and our country, have become. He was born in Manistique, Michigan in 1891. At that time, the Civil War still cast a lingering shadow over the affairs of man. A crumpled Fourth of July photograph shows my father, Harvey Lindsey, and a rabble of young boys assembled on the courthouse steps at Omro, Wisconsin, with whiskey veterans of the Union Army, men of 40-odd years, dark, stern-eyed, wounded.

His years extended through eras of significant change and increasing complexity: the advent of the automobile, world-wide warfare, urbanization, and the shock of the Atomic Age. He died in 1971, following my return from the Vietnam War. He often spoke to me of that war and its effect as a catalyst for political and social change. The time of his youth wasn't simpler nor easier than ours, only different.

In his childhood the land was fresh. Woodlands, swimming holes, homesteads, and church socials were the order of the day. People could still read subtle signs of the seasons. A pocket knife could fashion fresh spring willow branches into a wooden whistle that sometimes would, sometimes "wouldn't" whistle. He lived in a time when everyone could tell a story. This is part of his.

"I am convinced that there is no more satisfactory place for a boy to grow up in than the environs of a small town with four distinct seasons. Our town of Omro was just such a place. Omro was then, as now, a town of about 1,500 souls set in the middle of lovely and prosperous Midwest farm country. The town itself straddled the Fox River, a slow, meandering, navigable stream. The land adjacent to the stream was marshy, rising gently away from the river. Annual floods provided soil of unusual richness and depth, lending itself to diversified farming and dairying."

"We moved to Omro in 1895. The town had seven churches, five grocery stores, two dry goods stores, a hardware store, butcher shop, grist mill, saw mill, druggist, one saloon, an undertakers parlour, lumber yard, 3 schools, a cobbler, blacksmith, five carriage makers, and Yep Wang's Chinese Laundry. Yep laundered and pressed the countless shirt collars and detachable cuffs fashionable in those days. Yep spit a stream of water explosively from his mouth providing the moisture necessary for "steaming" laundered goods."

Horses and horse-drawn conveyances dominated transport and commerce in the 1890's. My dad and his pals haunted Abbott's Carriage shop as boys of my time loitered around the local service station customizing cars.

"Old Man Abbott specialized in wheel-equipped buggies and phaetons for summer use and "cutters" (light-weight sleighs with runners) for winter use. It was a good show to watch Mr. Wiles "sweat" an iron tire on a new wagon wheel. The rim and other wooden parts were seasoned oak - the rim slightly tapered to receive the iron tire. The tire, usually 3 or 4 inches wide and 3 - 4 feet in diameter had been made from a flat strip by first heating it cherry red, then shaping and welding it on the anvil. Mr. Wiles let us boys pull the bellows chain for the forge. When the iron tire was the right temperature it was quickly fitted to the wood rim amid much pounding and scorching of wood. The din of hammer and iron and the billows of acrid smoke lent excitement to the proceedings."

"Fortunate, indeed, is the boy who has a river in his childhood," my father once told us. Muskrat trapping, sturgeon fishing, and surfing wake waves from the sternwheeler *Fashion* out of Oshkosh occupied many of his childhood hours. He describes the sternwheeler *Slocum* engaged in hauling log rafts:

"The *Slocum* was a work horse. She was a sternwheeler. A log raft was hauled behind the boat by a steel cable wound round a large drum on the roof of the lower deck. The raft was allowed to fall behind by slackening the cable as the boat moved forward. When the *Slocum* was a quarter of a mile ahead of the raft, forward movement stopped and the boat was anchored by dropping the "Growser", a large piling running vertically through the deck. It was held in raised position, then lowered into soft mud after the *Slocum* advanced forward. The drum retrieved slack cable and the raft advanced."

Winter brought a river of ice, games of hockey, and the iceman.

"In late winter the ice got about 2 1/2 to 3 feet thick. The iceman appeared to harvest his summer requirements. He first "criss-crossed" with a horse drawn "scoring

plough", cutting a straight-line trench about an inch deep in the river ice. Pieces 2 feet by three feet could be easily cracked from the river and surface hauled to the icehouse. Layered with sawdust, the ice kept long into summer."

"By late November we virtually lived on our ice skates. Skating miles up and down river we played our version of ice hockey, which we called "Shinny". For a puck we sawed a round block off the end of a large branch. Crooked willow branches of the right curve, laboriously carved with jack knives, became our "Shinny sticks".

In the rural America of my father's day, observance of the Sabbath punctuated the week for virtually all members of the community regardless of individual religious fervor.

"Sunday was a day apart. From the time we got up until we went to bed, strict rules prevailed. First, we dressed in Sunday clothes: buttoned shoes, long black cotton socks, long elastic "sling-shot" garters for the stockings, a stiffly starched "shirt waist", broad ruffled collar, and a straw hat complete with notched ribbon hanging in back. The outfit was designed for keeping an active boy from having any fun."

"Church ran from 9 til 11 a.m. Sunday school lasted from 11 a.m. through noon. In the evening we all traipsed back to church for another two hour service."

"Lines of moral behavior were sharply drawn. You either went to church, which virtually everyone did, or you were outside the social fence. If you were in business, you'd better not be seen in the saloon."

By 1910, the Lindsey family moved westward, no longer able to resist the tug toward the Pacific so irresistible to Easterners. In 1912 he secured a job as Purser on the Willamette river boats. Through connections with a friend in Pacific County, Washington, he took a job surveying land in and around Chinook, Washington. He lodged above the offices of *The Chinook Observer*. Its editor, Jack Payne, survived the wreckage of the vessel *Strathblane*, arriving in Pacific County on the tail of a horse. But that's another story.

Peter Lindsey

This Month in Oregon History

Oct. 11, 1923

The last great train robbery in the United States took place on this day, in Southern Oregon. Twins Ray and Roy De Autremont and their younger brother Hugh held up S.P.'s southbound train #13 in tunnel 13. The brothers jumped the train just before it entered the half-mile long tunnel, assuming that the blast of the explosives they planned to use would be muffled inside. Actually it acted as an echo chamber especially since they used much more

dynamite than necessary, blowing not only the door off the mail car, but destroying the car itself, any money inside, and killing four men in the process. The brothers fled and hid out in the woods. Ray and Roy were finally captured in 1927, following the most extensive and expensive manhunt in the U.S. up to that time.

Oct. 14, 1864

The State Legislature, on this day, created two new counties in Eastern Oregon; Grant and Union, the first being composed of parts of Wasco and Umatilla and the latter carved from Baker. Little opposition occurred in either House, although a few Southern sympathizers objected to honoring General Grant and vainly attempted to substitute the name Granite in the House. La Grande was named county seat of Union and it was thought that Canyon City would be Grant's county seat.

Oct. 22, 1844

"Tuesday, Oct. 22. Cold. Having a little wood and water left, we had a little breakfast. Drove on and camped where we had grass, wood, and water... Here we see the best of the bottom land and nearly 300 horses on it... I never saw such a lot of horses. They are owned by the Indians and I suppose they have thousands of them. These Indians are so located that they get cattle in abundance from the finest of stock and will soon be rich."

(Entry from anonymous pioneer's diary made on the Oregon Trail. The location that morning was an open prairie near the snow-covered Blue Mountains.)

Oct. 31, 1915

Silas Christofferson, who amazed spectators with his aerobatic feats and may best be remembered for his daring flight from the top of the Multnomah Hotel to Vancouver during the Rose Festival, was killed in an airplane crash this day. The young Portlander who built and flew his own aircraft at the age of 20 had just set a world's altitude record, climbing to nearly 20,000 feet, the year before.

(The above information was supplied by the Oregon Historical Society and "This Day in Oregon" by Image West Press, PO Box 5511, Eugene, Or.)



Harvey Lindsey (left) with pianist Charles Deemer



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Bud and Sally lived in the hills east of Newport. This occurred early in the marriage. Sally tells it.

"I wasn't very happy. Mother warned me about marrying a man whose family I'd never met but when Bud asked, I said "Yes."

"I was beginning to wonder if I'd made the right decision. I still hadn't met Bud's family and they only lived a couple hundred miles away. Then there was the boat.

"It never entered my mind that, without saying one word to me, Bud would put us over a thousand dollars in debt to buy some fancy fishing boat. It made me mad every time I looked out the window and, there it sat, all shiny in the driveway.

"Then one night he was late for supper and he knew I was fixing roast. It would be well done, ruined if he didn't get home.

"Well, finally, I turned the oven off, stomped out to my old Volkswagen and went looking for him and there was his pickup parked in front of the tavern. Damn him! I was so mad!"

Sally parked behind the tavern and started in the back door. What she saw

stopped her in her tracks. Bud was sitting at a table with several people. One of them was a woman with long, blond hair. Bud had his arm around her and she was smiling up into his face. Sally shut the door and drove home.

"That was it by God. The end. I'd flat had enough."

She began throwing Bud's clothes out in the yard. She added his guns and fishing tackle. Then she had an idea.

"I threw it all into the boat, took the cap off the gas can and turned it over on top of his stuff." She stepped back from the boat, lit a match and threw it in. The gasoline took off with a satisfying whump.

"I hadn't been back in the house more than a minute when I could hear the fire engine coming." The neighbor must have called. The whole boat was involved in the fire by then.

"Too late. Take that, Buddy boy."

"Then the phone rang and, Oh God it was awful. It was Bud. 'Hey honey' he says, 'get dressed up and meet us at the tavern. My folks showed up just at quitting time and dad wants to take us all out to dinner. And honey, guess what, Lita, my twin sister is here all the way from the east coast. They can't wait to meet you. You there honey? What's wrong, honey? You sound like you're crying.'" (That was 17 years ago, they're still wed.)

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POWER..."
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