



LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
**QUINAULT**  
AND MUSEUM  
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# Newsletter

## Fall & Winter 2013

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### Wilson Family History in the Quinault Valley

Chester Albean Wilson, born April 22, 1889, in Fargo, N.D. lived in Parker's Prairie, MN. An only child, he came to Quinault in late summer of 1895 with his widowed mother, Hannah Wilson, and her sister, Christine Hanson, and their niece, Selma Hulten. Hannah and Christine's sister, Bothilda, had come to this area with her husband John August Olson and nine of their eleven children that preceding June. The Olsons settled on the south bank of the Quinault River about 8 miles above the lake. Hannah and Christine took adjoining claims about 1.5 miles downriver from the Olsons. Two years later, Selma's parents, Sven "Swan" Hulten and his wife, Ellen, along with the rest of their children ventured to the Quinault valley.

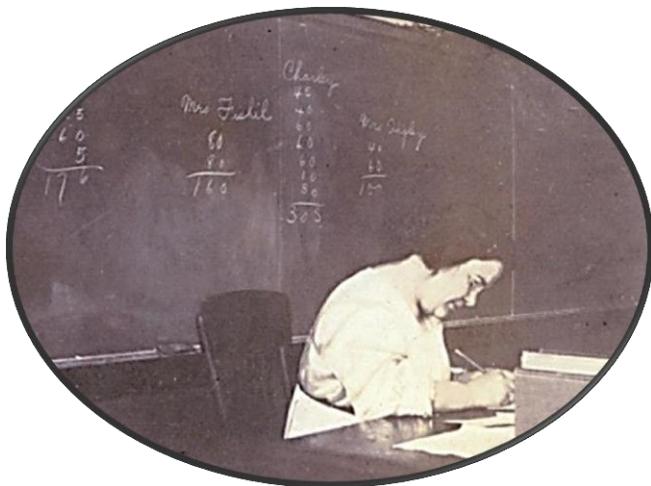
In Trails and Trials of the Pioneers of the Olympic Peninsula compiled by Lucile Cleland, Ernest Olson related that Hannah, Chester, Christine and the Hulten family lived "in an old shack on the riverbank, owned by the Borden brothers." A late winter storm of warm torrential rains resulted in rapid melting and a rise in the river level so high that they had "to flee for their lives. All they saved from the house was some flour and their blankets. The water came up so rapidly that the banks were cut away nearly as fast as they could run with the children." Bud Loomis, a friend and neighbor, recounted how "they fled into the edge of a clearing and climbed onto a big rotten (spruce) log. They saw the house float away. But still the river kept rising until finally the log they were on began to float." Richard Olson related in Grandfather Remembers that "Uncle Hulten fell trees in a criss-cross fashion with each tree closer to shore than the one before in an attempt to span the distance from the log to the shore. The water was too turbulent to make that plan work." Ernest continued, "As Christine Hanson reached out to protect her nephew, Chester, a limb of the falling alder broke her arm. Night was coming on. They had no house, no food – nothing but the clothes on their backs and the six wet blankets. The chilled refugees were forced to spend 30 hours on the log until help came. John and Ernest Olson rescued them the following morning. Ernest walked forty-four miles to New London where he then took a boat to Hoquiam. A doctor accompanied him in the rowboat back to New London and from there the doctor went by horseback to Humptulips, got a fresh mount and continued to the Olson ranch. By the time the doctor arrived, John Olson had set Christine's broken arm to which the doctor declared that it was a very good job and should not be touched."

Chester worked on the trail crew for the Forest Service. He was also employed at the West Fork Splash Dam which was owned by the Humptulips Driving Company. When logs would get hung up in the river, Chester would set the explosive charge to dislodge them. His son, Raleigh, related that one winter day, Chester fell in the river while freeing up the logs. Bo Elder, a co-worker, helped him out, got him to a dry, warm place and gave him a shot of whiskey. There were no ill effects from that experience. A picture in Frontier Legacy –

History of the Olympic National Forest 1897-1960 by J.R. Rooney shows Chester, Teander Olson, Fritz Halbert and Orlo Higley knitting sweaters for soldiers in WWI. Chester Creek and Chester Ridge were named after him.

In 1920 or 1921, Rebecca Lortie married Chester Wilson. Born in Seattle, she grew up with three sisters and a brother and came to this area as a teacher. She taught school for many years here. The couple had nine children. Chester Lawrence was the first and came into this world in 1922. The other children in order of birth: Isabelle Teresa, Rowena Vesta, Vernon Oliver, Wilbur John (Jack), Olive Rose, Bonita "Bonnie" Carol, Serena "Nena" Edith, and Raleigh Dan.

A story in Trails and Trials... relates how after a night when the Wilson family had attended a school function, they returned home minus one child but didn't make the discovery until the following morning. The teacher had found the sleeping boy and taken him home with her.



Rebecca Lortie Wilson at the Quinault School, before 1921



1921 – Rebecca Rose Lortie (Wilson), Bothilda Olson. Miss Lortie was a school teacher and boarded with the Olson family.

Chester owned and operated a dairy with at least 20 Jersey cows in the Quinault area and grew hay. The kids helped to milk the cows and delivered it to homes. Raleigh recounted a story of when he was with Jack. His older brother drove off the road on the Adams Grade and got the dairy van stuck. Jack was anxious – he was too young for a license. Fortunately there was no damage to their vehicle. Hollinger, owner of the Quinault Garage at the time, pulled them out. Raleigh also recalls the electric fence surrounding the cows and how his brothers, Jack and Vern, talked him into touching it. Another time, Raleigh learned that looking at a bull in the wrong way could irritate him enough to charge. He had to run across a creek in new shoes to get away.



Chester Wilson holding a few stalks of very tall canarygrass. Wilson Dairy delivery van. Circa 1944.

After the end of WWII, Chester sold the land that the dairy had been on to Lud Esses and moved to Olympia to purchase a larger dairy and better farmland. By that time only the four youngest children were still living at home. Raleigh was eleven then and was up at 5 a.m. to milk cows using machines.

Lawrence stayed in Quinault and bought 100 acres of the Olson homestead as well as 20 acres from Roy Streater. He needed land for the 35-40 head of cattle which he kept. He hauled logs to town as a private trucker and also hired out to Ingrams at one point to limb spruce, breaking an axe in the process. For many years, he supplied firewood to the Quinault Lodge.

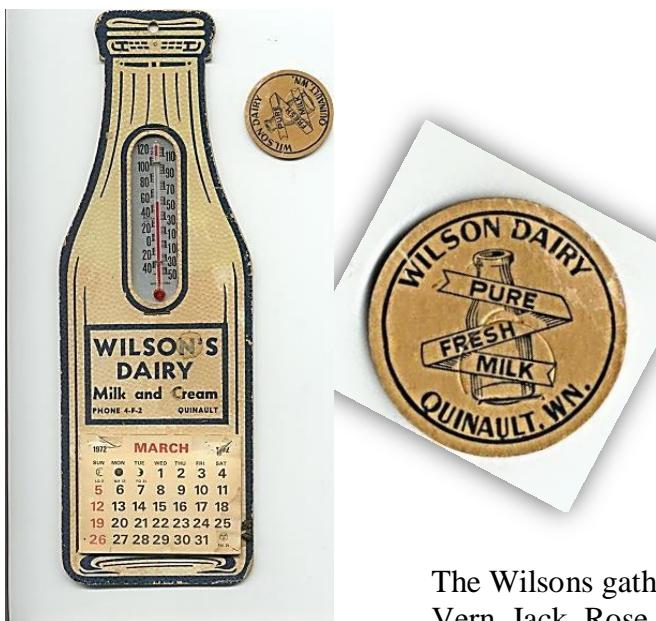
After stints in the service, Jack, Vern and Raleigh came back to Quinault and worked as fallers for Rayonier and also for gypco loggers. Jack, soon after, moved to Olympia where he operated a dairy. Vern also cleared blow-down for the Park Service when needed.

None of the Wilson daughters returned to live in the area. Isabelle Carlyle currently lives in Tumwater. Rowena Sampson lived in Hoquiam where she raised her children. She later married Wally Cromm and relocated to Canada. Rose Cardoza resided in California. Bonnie married Dave Kreiner and is in Silverdale. Nena married Larry Brown and lives in Black Lake. Of the boys, Raleigh remains in Quinault and continues to raise a few

cattle. The property owned by Lawrence is still in the family.

By Dorothy Davis

This 1941 picture of the Wilson children shows them waiting in line to board the school bus. The eldest, Lawrence sees that everyone gets on safely. Lawrence, Isabelle, Rowena, Vernon, "Jack", Rose, Bonnie, "Nena" and Raleigh.



The Wilsons gather for a family reunion in 1981. Lawrence, Isabelle, Rowena, Vern, Jack, Rose, Bonnie, Nena and Raleigh.



Al and May Torres

in Olympia on February 27, 1943. I asked Al about the gypsy's prediction and he said he did often stand in the doorway of his tent and would look at the stars!"

Al was stationed at Hoquiam for a time where he helped lay communications lines along the coast in preparation for possible Japanese attacks. (Japanese balloon bombardments). He was then sent overseas to England where he served with the Allied Forces (44th Division, HQ Co 114th Infantry) in the invasion of Normandy. He spent two years in the European Theater and was part of the Army forces that made their way to Germany.

## Louis Albert Torres

*~ In Memorium ~1918 - 1998*

Branch of Service/Rank **Army/Sgt. T4**

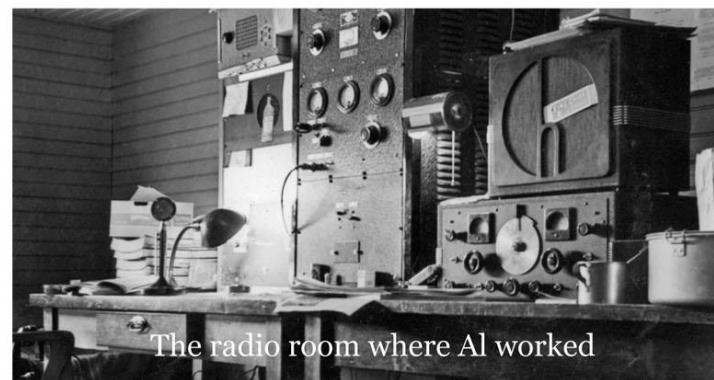
Dates of Service **1940 - 1945**

Basic Training **New York**

Discharged **Ft. Lewis, Washington**

*~ As told by May Torres*

"Before I ever knew Al I was told by a gypsy in Aberdeen that I wouldn't marry the man I was then engaged to but would meet and marry a "small man who was standing in the doorway of a tent, studying the stars!" Up until the time I met Al I liked to go to USO dances in Aberdeen and would catch rides in the trucks that the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) fellows drove from up above our ranch in the Quinault. I was a USO volunteer and would play the piano at these dances along with my other friends who played in the band. I was about 25 when I met Al and we were married



The radio room where Al worked



Al was an expert rifleman

During the time Al was overseas May and her two small children, Patty and Louie lived in a boarding house in Hoquiam. After Al's discharge they returned to Lake Quinault where Al was employed as a "gandy-dancer" (railroad repairman) working for the Polson Logging Company. He also worked for the U.S. Park Service, Esses Shingle Mill at Amanda Park and the Department of Transportation's maintenance division in the Quinault and Clearwater. He retired in 1983.

Al, May and children lived in the old Quinault Post Office for many years where May was the postmaster until her retirement in 1985.

The "old Quinault Post Office" is now the "Lake Quinault Museum" and May is a charter member of the museum.

***Medals awarded Louis "Al" Torres***



*European African,  
Middle Eastern Service  
Medal*



*American Defense Service Medal*



*American Theatre  
Service Medal*



*Good Conduct Medal*



On October 1st the Museum hosted this special group from Channel Point Village. We were delighted to see May (Olson) Torres and her sister, Oma (Olson) Logue. Refreshments were enjoyed, especially by my great-grandson, Riot. By Phyllis

2013 was a very good year for the Museum. We have had visitors from 44 states, plus Washington D.C. and Guam; 6 Canadian provinces; and 22 foreign countries including: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and Venezuela. We hosted our second annual Armed Forces Day open house, our first annual "Art at the Lake" "So Long Summer-Hello Fall" Arts and Crafts Fair featuring our own local talent and music by the Muddyshoes Band, and several tour groups.

We are again seeking funding from Grays Harbor Tourism for the design and installation of our own Web Page. The grant was denied last year but we are hopeful that it will be approved this time. If so, a whole new medium will be opened to us. In addition to the traditional informative pages, we are looking to display our Dell Mulkey and Dale Northup photos, our newsletters would be available for your reading pleasure as well as research, and upcoming Museum events would be posted. We are so excited!



Tom Northup is standing watch as Chris Christiansen is applying the final coat of paint to the eaves and trim. A second coat of stain on the building was put on last year and now with the trim finished we are looking pretty spiffy!

Directly under the scaffolding is our little vegetable garden.

Even though we got a late start with planting the seeds we were pleased with our crop of peas, corn, green beans and tomatoes and enjoyed sharing them with our guests.

Every once in a while we tend to go "*out of the box*" when putting together a display. We would prefer calling it creativity but, alas, it comes back to "*out of the box...*" Over the past several years we've had a concern about large motorhomes pulling up in front of the Museum a little too close for comfort, threatening the integrity of our porch and flags. This year our flags went down the road so it was time to do something. After thinking on this unsuccessfully, we happened on to this huge birdcage. Attaching wheels to the frame for easy moving and putting a colorful plant inside for visibility, it fit the bill. Definitely a conversation piece and an attention getter, we were quite pleased with ourselves. That is, until a guest asked, "Why didn't you just put out one of those orange cones they use for traffic control?" Duh! Too easy and not "*out of the box*." Visit us this next season and see our cage! We haven't decided yet on what to put in it....Any suggestions??

On November 2nd, the Amanda Park Timberland Library hosted authors Peter Schafer Reid and Barbara Seal Ogle at the Lake Quinault Lodge for a Saturday afternoon program. Following the program was an Open House at the Museum.

At its peak in the 1920s, Schafer Bros., one of the largest lumber businesses in the Northwest, commissioned several movies of their operations. The films were recently restored and Peter Reid, a member of the Schafer family, showed portions of the three films and gave a brief history of the company.

The Schafer brothers, Peter (Reid's grandfather), Albert and Hubert began logging in 1893 on the family homestead six miles upstream from the mouth of the Satsop River. By the 1920's the Schafers were running one of the largest logging, milling and shipping concerns in the Northwest, employing about 3,000 people.

In Memory: Donald George Furu, 88, passed away Sept. 20, 2013. He was raised in logging camps and spent summers at the Enchanted Valley where his parents operated the lodging facilities. Don's early school days were at Quinault where, by the stories he has told over the years, he was quite a character. Always with a touch of humor, he has shared those memories with us. He was loved and respected and will be missed.





September 7<sup>th</sup> we hosted our first annual Art and Craft Fair. The day was delightful, sunny and warm, just a great day to go out and do something different. Our vendors were all local craftsmen and artists and offered a variety of goods. Nan and Steve Rutledge had their woodcraft and Nan had paper art for kids to do at home. Kathy Clayton and Nikki Hay shared a table with handmade baskets. Nikki also does glass yard-art. Margaret Johnston worked on Native American jewelry and Vicki Trudeau offered Native American art, including basketry, weaving and hats. Rounding out our event included Ceil Partridge's postcards and Tobie brought family paintings and crocheted items by Elizabeth Carlyle. And as always, music by Muddy and Friends was appreciated and enjoyed.

