



Larry Albert Price

February 12, 1931 - February 13, 2021

Larry Price 1931-2021

Obituary - (or The Legend of Lightening Larry)

Given Larry's love of story, we offer this short biography in addition to the traditional obituary. This is s a collaborative effort his children compiled from stories remembered and excerpts from a biography Larry wrote to his children in 1989. Parts of Larry's biography are included in italics.

Larry Price was born in a log cabin during a snow storm on February 12, 1931 in Fairview MT, which is right on the North Dakota line. It was "The Toughest Town in the West" at the time, according to Google. He has been one tough, lovable, cowboy ever since. He was the second son of five children born to Lawrence and Lydia Price, but filled the role of oldest son when Maynard contracted spinal meningitis as a toddler and became disabled.

The family eventually grew to five children: Maynard, Larry, Charles, Ruth and June. They moved often in his early years. He remembered living in at least four different houses in Fairview, then Malta and Wenatchee. By second grade he had been to three different schools.

Dad got a job on road construction and we lived in a home-made trailer house and followed the road job that summer, setting up camp and tearing down camp and moving along as the road building progressed. We lived in a trailer which was built of plywood on an old car frame so you can imagine how small and crowded it must have been. Well, when fall came the road was finished so we just kept heading west and ended up in Wenatchee.

Late spring Dad loaded up the truck and took Charles and me and we moved to Deer Park, Washington. He bought a 40 acre "stump ranch" with an old log home and log barn and later sent for Mom and the girls. After Dad got us settled at Deer Park, he couldn't find a job, so he went back to the old road job in Montana and let us fend for ourselves. At first, he had no money to send to us. I remember our neighbor got to feeling sorry for us and shot a porcupine for us to eat. I guess I wasn't too hungry yet because the "porcky" didn't taste very good to me. Later dad sent money home and Mom bought a cow (I remember she paid \$60 for it) and a couple of pigs. There were a lot of coyotes nearby and at night when we went to bed, we heard them howling. A year later they moved to Green Acres near Spokane. Larry saved the money he earned picking strawberries and raspberries for two years until he was able to buy a brand-new bicycle. The family moved again just before Larry started fifth grade. He went to Occident School with one room and 11 kids. They lived about four miles from an Army Air Corp Field.

One day a B-24 with a full load of bombs crashed about halfway between us and the airfield. The bombs exploded and we thought the Germans were after us. We were in school at the time and it sure rattled that old building. This was in the fall of 1941.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, we (Chas and I) were helping some neighbors haul hay which they were buying from another neighbor. After lunch the neighbor came back over to our house and told us that he had heard on the radio about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. We didn't have a radio, so we hadn't heard it. This was the beginning of World War II and a very scary time for everyone. My dad bought a radio soon after that so we could keep up on current events, and news of the war was on all the time. Many of our friends and relatives and neighbors went off to war. Many never returned.

The next move was to Orchard Prairie where they lived for four years. The school still had only one room and one teacher but there were 25 to 30 kids of all ages. It was there that he met Dick Wally and Carl LeFave. They became life-long friends and later Carl and Larry bought farms just six miles apart

where they lived and enjoyed a friendship the rest of their lives.

We walked about two miles to school, through the field to LeFave's house to pick up Carl, then down his lane to the road to Walley's. Dick and Betty Jo were never quite ready to go so we would wait for them (Dick had 5 or 6 cows to milk before school). Then up through the Haney's woods to the back of the school yard. The teacher was there early and had the fire going in the big stove. We sat around the stove warming up in the morning while the teacher read to us. I remember one book she read was "Uncle Tom's Cabin". At a half hour every morning it took all winter to read it.

In the winter we ice skated, and we went sledding on Lages Hill. We used to take our work horse, Pat, and harness him up after school, hitch him to a "stone boat" (a sort of flat sled) and pile on 5-6 kids and run around all over the countryside having a ball. Sometimes we'd take Rex, tie a rope to his tail and use him to pull us on skis while one of us rode him.

In the summer we would work for the neighboring farmers. I remember the first year we planted cabbage (transplanted actually). Ruth and Charles carried plants to three of us who were planting. Ruth earned 15 cents per hour, Charles 20 cents per hour and I earned 30 cents. We worked from 7 AM to 6 PM with an hour out for lunch. We were 7, 10 and 11 years old.

After the bombing of Hiroshima, we knew that it was only a matter of time and were expected an armistice to be signed any day. One afternoon in August 1945 we heard whistles and sirens from all over Spokane and Spokane Valley and we knew that the war was over. When Dad came home from work, he piled us all in the car and we went to town. What a celebration! The streets were so full of people cars could hardly move. People were shouting, singing, hugging, kissing drinking and really having a ball.

Larry started high school at West Valley that fall and was introduced to football. He also boxed and ran track breaking a regional record. He graduated Cheney High School in 1949.

I thought it (football) was the most fun I had ever had in my life. I was big for

my age. One of the biggest and roughest kids on the team. Three years later when playing on the Cheney High School team, I was one of the smallest. Everyone else kept growing but I did not.

Our well was up in the field behind the house at Cheney. It had a pump with a gasoline engine and a storage tank that held about 300 gallons. When we ran out of water at the house, we would go and start the engine and let it run for an hour or so. The water tank was packed in straw to keep it from freezing, which didn't really help that much. One windy night a spark from the engine ignited the straw and we were out of water for a long time, because it burned the engine, pump, straw, tank and pump house. We hauled water from Ditton's in town and went to their house for our weekly bath all the rest of the winter.

Larry joined the Coast Guard in 1941 as the Korean war broke out. He was mostly stationed in Alaska on a ship called the USCG Cutter Clove, sailing from Kodiak the end of the Aleutian chain, up to Point Hope which is North of the Arctic Circle, back down to Kodiak, then Seattle and back up to Alaska again. He connected with the wild beauty of the land and loved Alaska.

It was really a great experience. I visited Eskimo villages, the Mendenhall Glacier, Nome, went sea lion Hunting, got lost in the fog near Lake Diomedes Island, rode out some extremely high seas, nearly capsized in a small boat, saw the midnight sun, broke ice 6-7 feet thick on an icebreaker, risked my life one time recovering a dead man, had very exciting dangerous experiences, also nearly died of boredom.

After discharge, he worked at Geiger Field rebuilding the runways for what is now Spokane International Airport. One night he and a buddy had the crazy idea to go to the WSU School of Nursing dorm in Spokane and asked the house mother if there happened to be a couple of girls who would like to go out for coffee. Lois Goehri and a friend were granted permission. When the four of them walked out to the car, Lois slid into the front seat next to Larry who was driving. They were married May 18, 1957 at the Nazarene church in Millwood. Larry soon secured a job with Boeing and the young couple moved

to Seattle, packing up everything they owned into their 1956 VW Bug which he had bought new almost a year earlier for \$1,760. Their first child, Lyndon was born there.

Lois worked in surgery, on call 24 hours a day at \$1.80/hour. We had a \$60.00/month apartment, \$60.00/month car payment \$12.50/month wedding ring/engagement ring payment and quickly becoming affluent. We just couldn't stand the prosperity, so I quit Boeing to go to college, she quit the hospital to have a baby.

They moved to Pullman and Larry finished his degrees in Agriculture and Journalism. His second child, Wendy was born while they lived in WSU married student housing. She was taken home from the hospital in his 1929 Model A that was the family car. He later restored it, and it remained one of his most treasured possessions.

A farmer and a cowboy was what Larry really always wanted to be. As luck would have it, Lois's parents had a corn and cattle operation near Moses Lake, so he went to work as a hired hand for Lloyd and Alice Goehri, where he could also use his father-in law's farm equipment to develop his own 130 acre farm. They bought the farm for \$15,000. Terms were \$1,000 down and \$1,000 a year plus 4% interest. Their third child Amy was born while they lived at the labor house on his in-laws farm. Soon Larry and Lois had built a house and shop on their farm. He worked by day on the farm and did custom baling and harrowbedding at night. It was there that they had two more children; Maxine and Timothy.

An entrepreneur at heart and a hard worker by necessity and habit, he partnered with a group of young cowboy farmers and formed the Valley Grazing Association. Together they bought land in Republic WA and secured forest service permits for grazing cattle on adjacent land. For many years he wintered the herd in the Columbia Basin delivering the new crop of calves and grazed them in the mountains during the summer complete with a big round up each fall.

He registered his own brand for his cattle. It was a lightning bolt with LP

under, earning him the occasional nickname of “Lightening Larry”. Realizing his small farm could not support his growing family, he sold the now developed land in 1969 and bought a 300-acre farm near Ephrata WA.

The time has gone so fast, it sometimes seems like only yesterday since we moved here. It’s been change water, chase cows, cut hay, harvest wheat, change water, bale hay, change water fix broken down machinery, change water and then start over again ever since we came here. I was of the opinion that living on a farm and teaching you kids the work ethic, the value of money, responsibility would do more to prepare you for life than living the soft life in town could ever do.

Farming and ranching life is filled with ups and downs and he was usually ahead of his time with new ideas that did not always work out, but he never, never gave up. He took a class on artificial insemination and ordered top bloodlines from a catalog of prize Simmental bulls until he had a fine herd with impressive pedigrees. He took several to a show in Portland where they sold for an incredible price... just before the rest of his herd caught a disease (Brucellosis) and had to be destroyed.

He bought an early prototype hay compressor and developed contracts selling quality alfalfa overseas. Many the day and often into late into the night he was in the field with a toolbox, baling wire and duct tape making that old machine work to fill an order. Hay compressors caught on and he upgraded, but his ability to make most anything work one way, or another served him well.

Along with his five children, there was often an extra kid or two, nieces, nephews and the occasional neighbor that happened to stop by at mealtime. There was always enough food for everyone gathered around the table and everyone was always welcome.

What I cherish most about all the time when you kids were growing up was our meal times together. Especially in the evenings when we sat and talked about everything that happened to everyone that day, joked and teased, played “pig” made plans etc.

When he retired and rented out the farm, they enjoyed several years of traveling in a motor home. He restored several more classic cars and drove them in parades. They were active with The Basin Horseless Carriage Club and he won numerous awards. His grandchildren have fond memories of riding with Grandma and Grandpa in parades, waving American Flags out the windows and throwing candy to the crowds. Later in life he also took up piano, skiing and trick bicycle riding, and started writing and reciting cowboy poetry. He and Lois had a lot of fun at cowboy poetry gatherings, and he organized a local poetry event several winters at the While Trail Grange. Many of his stories and poems have been compiled into a book called "Horses, Cows, Kids and Dogs." And later another one called "I'm Really Not a Cowboy". They spent winters in Arizona where they met up with friends and family, had pot lucks, played cards and he became a hiking legend by regularly out walking guys fifteen years or more his junior.

He loved God and his family. His Christian faith was a big part of who he was. His church family, neighbors and friends meant the world to him.

He died on February 13, 2021 after a day of celebrating his 90th birthday with his children and enjoying one of his favorite treats, a root beer float.

He was preceded in death by his wife Lois, brother Maynard, sister Ruth, and grandson Cameron. He is survived by his five children, ten grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. He was well loved by everyone that knew him, perhaps, because he just truly loved people

Previous Events

Reception

MAR 27. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Community Church of Ephrata
54 K Street SE
Ephrata, WA 98823

Tribute Wall



“ *Nicoles Funeral Home and Valley View Memorial Park created a Tribute Video in memory of Larry Albert Price*



Nicoles Funeral Home and Valley View Memorial Park - March 18, 2021 at 02:26 PM

TG

“ *Lois and Larry were one of the best matched couples. Lois - quiet, happy, content - always busy working, even with painful arthritis. Larry - bold, confident, always working and thinking of new projects - laughing - loved people. God directed Larry's life's work. Lois laughed with Larry.*

Both Lois and Larry were committed to their marriage and family. They made a success of their marriage and their family. They made a success of their farm and they raised exceptional citizens for the USA. Larry and Lois' wonderful kids - Lyndon, Wendy, Amy, Maxine and Tim - are a testament to the love and goodness of their parents. Death of couples like Larry and Lois make it so difficult to accept their passing. The only solace is Christians will meet again in God's love and generosity. Dolores Gehrig

Theresa Gehrig - April 10, 2021 at 12:40 PM

JP

“ Greetings to you kids from Joanne. so sorry for the loss of your dad. I can see him in my memory, young at heart smiling and joining in the games with you kids and Buddy. Tho we lost touch, memories of your folks, your family are so dear. Amy wanting to see us so it was a day to make cinnamon rolls and there we would be. Bud wanting to see Tim so we planned a day at the farm. I bought the book your dad wrote with the picture of Bud on the front and gave it to him. I don't know where you all live now, I am still in Moses Lake. I will be 75 in June. I will let Bud know of your dad passing. Hope to see you on the 27th.

Love and prayers,
Joanne Yeggy-Peters

Joanne Peters - March 17, 2021 at 07:13 PM

PG

“ Larry was the hardest working man I have ever had the pleasure, and I do mean pleasure, to have met.

Paul Gehrig - March 17, 2021 at 06:49 PM

CG

“ Thank you Larry (and Lois) for giving us memories that brought our family together and gave us something to smile about every time we gather. For that matter, my kids know about the Prices in Ephrata and the great stories that we love to recall. When the boys get together we start remembering all the fun Larry gave us hunting on his property. Why he ever opened his door to my dad and mom and the seven of us little kids I will never know. But I will be forever grateful. I have amazing memories of walking the fields hunting pheasants, climbing hay, watching life go by, eating around the table, and always laughing! Larry we owe a good part of our family history to your kindness. You welcomed us in to your family and shared your table with us and we are better for it. For that we will always fondly remember you. Thank you Mr. Price.

chris gehrig - March 17, 2021 at 06:01 PM

TG

So many memories of Larry our friends the Prices. The Prices opened their farm, home and hearts to 'their friends from the coast'. It became a friendship, cultural exchange and bond that meant so much to my family. It started with hunting but became so much more. Some favorite memories - changing irrigation lines on frosty mornings, lifting massive bales of alfalfa to hungry cattle, riding Honda 90's, chasing chickens who never got caught, huge breakfasts with warm milk straight from the cow and the Prices visiting us one summer. We learned so much in Ephrata and had so much fun with the Prices. We love you and miss Lois and Larry. Thank you.

- Tom Gehrig

tom gehrig - March 21, 2021 at 01:41 PM

LP

Thanks, Chris and Tom, for the great comments. My Dad absolutely loved the Gehrig family. What a wonderful thing for you guys to comment on here

Lyndon Price - March 23, 2021 at 10:26 PM