

Samuel Gibson Hadley: (1856-1954)

My great grandfather, **Samuel Gibson Hadley**, <http://www.hadleygenealogy.net/ghtout/grpf5902.html> was born in 1856 in Oregon Territory, just north of present day Myrtle Creek, Douglas, OR, on the South Umpqua River. He was the third child of Samuel Bradley and Amelia (Emily Amelia) Hadley. By the time he was two years old, his family moved to an area just northeast of current day Yreka, Siskiyou, CA. There, the family grew by five more children. Before he was 10, the family had moved back to their land in Douglas County. There, his youngest brother was born in 1866. The family eventually moved to the Summer Lake Valley near Paisley, Lake County, Oregon in the late 1870s, where many of them married and are buried.



I have heard stories of my great grandfather my entire life. The first story I remember hearing about him, and I have heard it several times from several people, was how he would ride his horse through the Paisley, Lake, OR, saloon doors, up to the bar, order his drink, drink it down, and ride out – all the while on his horse. From all accounts, he was a hardworking, hard drinking, gambling guy who could cuss up a blue streak and was good looking (see [WPA interview](#)). His prowess was working horses.

Sam and his family made friends wherever they lived, with people of any race. While in Siskiyou County, they made friends with the local Siskiyou tribe and eventually adopted a young Siskiyou Indian boy whose mother was blind and father dead. They named him Joe Bowers. He lived with the family until his death in 1885 in an accident which occurred while rounding up horses. Sam enjoyed visiting Indian camps and was one of the few whites to earn the privilege of an Indian name – Summer Lake Sam. Sam maintained property in Douglas County, OR, until the early 1910s. While there, he would spend time with the Chinese miners along the river. My family has always loved Chinese food. I guess we come by this love from Sam and his eating with the miners at the camp at [China Ditch](#), Douglas, OR.

My great grandfather was close to his family. He stepped in to help his brother, Albert's, widow and children after his death. He is listed as part of the household one census. I think he might have remained a bachelor but at the age of 56, a widow with seven living children, caught his eye. They married in 1912. My grandfather, Lewis Gibson Hadley (1914-1998), was their second son of three. By the early 1920s, they divorced. Sam may have been older and a hard man to live with, but he obviously loved his sons. Lillian remarried and took the boys to live in Idaho for a time and Sam kept in touch with them. My grandfather tells stories of his father taking him and his brothers to Toppenish, Yakima, WA, at least once a year to visit family. Those stories tell me how deep Sam's love was. It's a 350 mile one way trip from Paisley to Toppenish, perhaps even farther from where the boys were living in Idaho, by today's highways. Paisley and Toppenish are in remote areas of their respective States. Maybe they went by horse and wagon; maybe by an early model car. No matter how they traveled, here's a tough, hard man in his 60s taking his young sons on a very long and challenging trip to see family on a regular basis. That's pretty awesome to me. I do know the relationships forged during these trips lasted until my grandfather's death in 1998. Many of the Toppenish relatives sent cards with very touching letters.

Sam purchased close to an acre of land within the Paisley city limits with three houses. Sam's house was a two room cabin. None of the houses had indoor plumbing – at least not bathrooms. He rented one of the houses to my grandparents. When renters left the larger house, my father's family moved in – next door to Sam. My father spent a good deal of time with his granddad.

My great grandfather went from a dirt floor cabin lit with candles and lanterns; horse and wagon; hunting and farming for all food to cars, electricity, plumbing, and grocery stores. He was born in Oregon Territory and died in Oregon State. One thing he really wanted was to fly in an airplane. The saddest story I have heard about Sam is his oldest son promising to take him flying. My great grandfather got up early, dressed in his best clothes, and waited for his son to take him on the experience of a lifetime. His son never showed up. Hearing that story broke my heart. It also taught me a few things. One, if we make a promise to someone, especially our family, follow through. Two, if it's in my power to make someone's dream come true, I need to do it. Three, if I have a dream, I need to do what I can to make it come true.

My great grandfather lived to the ripe old age of 98, dying in 1954. Even though he lived next door to my grandparents, caring for him became too much, so he spent his last days in a nursing home in Lakeview, Lake, OR. It must have been a depressing, challenging experience for a man who had traveled all over Oregon/Northern California/Southern Washington, a vital, hardworking, hard riding, hard drinking, gambling man who worked with horses and loved his family deeply. I know it made a deep, lasting impression on my father. My great grandfather may not have had the wealth and notoriety of some of his siblings, but to me, he is a hero. I love hearing the stories about him. I am awed by all he did in his life. I am thankful for the legacy he left with my grandfather, father, and now me. I hope I am living my life in a way that would please him. Samuel Gibson Hadley is a legend and his stories live on.

We thank Diana Hadley ddsodyssey@yahoo.com for this article.