

HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY, HENRY

"Henry Wadsworth Longfellow"

by Bonnie M. Longfellow Hixson, Pinillas Park, Florida

Henry was an imposing character in the ever-changing line of people that emerge upon the time line of this earth. Longfellows before Henry and after have left their mark on history. I have tried tracing my lineage back in an effort to find if my family is related to Henry; not a direct descendent but maybe through his brothers or cousins. As best as I have been able to find, we are! Some say no, but I like to think yes.

I was born in September 1928 as Bonnie Marie Longfellow. I had one brother Maurice. My father was Forest Reed Longfellow, who had three brothers and four sisters. His father was Robert son of a Thomas whose father was also Thomas. Of these people we are sure!

I was raised on a farm in Illinois and went 1.5 miles to a little country schoolhouse called Victor. Those were wonderful days of learning and play. We had wonderful teachers who taught us to appreciate reading, poetry, and drama. One Thanksgiving we were to present a play based on Henry's *Hiawatha*. It was a musical, I don't remember the part I played, but to this day I can remember the first few lines of the song we sang. "In the land of Dakota's dwelt an ancient arrow maker and his daughter Minnehaha, fairest of maids; to this wigwam in the forest, Hiawatha came..." The rest I forget. That was at least 68 years ago. We also learned "The Village Blacksmith" and I can still recite the first four lines. I loved all Indian stories and I think I have Mr. Longfellow to thank for that - bless Hiawatha's lines.

Some of Henry's characteristics I feel I have. I have written poems, short stories and I was a profitable artist at one time. I have the blue eyes, thick lips, and the fair skin apparent in Henry's immediate family.

I feel he did give to his family and the world a great legacy. If we are related, there is no way I'll really be sure in this world, but someday I believe we will meet in heaven and we can talk about it and then we'll know. Anyway, I am proud to be a Longfellow.

"Sonny and Me" by Bonnie Hixson

It was Sonny and Me who sailed the Sea,
And hunted for bear in the wood.
With rifle and bow we stalked our foe,
And caught them alive when we could.

We learned to fly, climbed a mountain high.
Explored many caves in strange lands.
We swam the Nile, killed the crocodile.
In China we rode the Sampans.

Yes it was Sonny and Me who sailed the Sea,
But the Sea was only a pond.
We hunted for bear who weren't really there,
And the foes we imagined are gone.

The caves we explored were made of cardboard.
The Nile was the creek at Uncle Sid's.
The land we did roam was really our home.
You see Sonny and me were just kids.



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