

REG. LINDSAY STORY PART 1

Hello Everyone

My name is **Dianne Lindsay** and through recent involvement with the Australian Bush Balladeers Association I have been asked to write an article on the life of my father, Reg. Lindsay. I am extremely proud to do this and thank Peter Coad and The Association for this wonderful opportunity. I would also like to say that I have enjoyed my involvement with the Association and its Members, realising its importance to our musical heritage.

Reg. Lindsay was born at Waverley in Sydney and spent his first couple of years there. The family then moved to Parkes (NSW) til Reg was about 8 years old and then to Adelaide where his dad became the Manager of the Adelaide Baths. Reg. lived in Adelaide until he was 20 years old and made the 3 day trip to Sydney by motor bike to compete in the Tim McNamara Talent Quest on Radio 2SM which he won.

Reg's dad, James, came from the Hunter Valley area, near Singleton and his mum, Ellen, grew up in Parkes and met while working in Sydney; John as an ambulance driver and Ellen in a family business.

Reg. always expressed an interest in music and showed his talent from an early age. While living in Parkes and nearby Temora, he became a dial-twidler, looking for his favourite music on the radio – the country music sessions. Wilf Carter and Tex Morton were some of his favourite artists and he remembers one night in Temora when a real live 'cowboy' in full western outfit and hat was singing and yodelling at the pictures during the interval. Another early memory which helped to create Reg's interest in the hill billy music of the time, is of a young classmate who sang and yodelled for his class at school. While growing up in Adelaide, Reg was interested in sports and was a great swimmer, becoming South Australian Swim Champion at 17 when he won the Metropolitan State Championship.

His Auntie Anne gave him his first guitar at 15 which Reg soon learned to play and during his school holidays Reg. would stay on friend's sheep stations; there he learned to ride steers, rope horses, shear sheep and became adept at stockwork whilst practising his singing and yodelling.

On leaving school, Reg. worked for the Department of Agriculture in the Brands Register and studied woolclassing hoping to be transferred to the Northern Territory as a woolclasser or a stock inspector. They seemed determined to keep him at a desk job, so he left and spent the next few years doing general bush work out in the country of South Australia, jackerooing on stations, windmill work, bore sinking and doing whatever was offered.

Reg. and his friend, Dave Burchell, began entertaining at small shows and doing some gigs organised by radio man Bob Fricker. The two boys auditioned for Australia's Amateur Hour but did not progress to the next round, so Reg. headed off to work in the bush again but was soon called back to Adelaide for a final audition. He travelled 450 kms by bus with his bed roll, drover's jacket and elastic-sided boots to pass the audition and the boys topped the poll on the Amateur Hour in 1950.

Shortly after this, Reg. accepted a job as a jackeroo on a Broken Hill station but while listening to the radio he heard about a huge talent quest being run by Tim McNamara on Sydney radio station 2SM with a recording contract as first prize. He wrote in for an audition, decided to pass up the jackeroo job, and rode an old ex-Army dispatch bike to Sydney to compete. The bike trip to Sydney took three days during which he slept by the bike on the side of the highway. He decided to perform his favourite Wilf Carter song, Streamline Yodel, and after a preliminary trial Reg. won his heat. Some of the artists to compete on the talent quest were George Payne, Shorty Ranger, Rick and Thel Carey and Kevin King. The historic final was held at Sydney Town Hall in January 1951 where Reg took out first prize and the contract with Rodeo records. His first recording with Rodeo Records was Blue Velvet Band and Streamline Yodel in 1951.

I hope that this short insight into the early years of Reg. Lindsay's life has been of interest to you and once again I am truly grateful to be able to share with you a story of one of Australia's true legends of country music, a story that because of circumstance and illness has not always been told and of someone I am very proud to call 'Dad'.

In the next issue of the ABBA Bulletin I will tell you about his radio and television shows, his recordings, the touring shows, his overseas success and some of the many things he has been able to accomplish in his lifetime of country music.