

Hi my name is John Simes this is my Grampy

John William Lowe

Grampy was born in Maynard, Massachusetts but moved four times while growing up. My grandfather is a very helpful person. For instance, when I ask him tough questions, he will always answer them. This is a story about Grampy and me. My grandfather is very intelligent, especially in mathematics. I learned he is very smart when we were playing, "Are You Smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> Grader?" While playing he was able to calculate the math problems in his head faster than I could set up the problems on a piece of paper. Although Grampy denies his intelligence, our entire family knows how clever he is. Thank you



Written by : John William Simes  
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John William Lowe was born September 22, 1937, in Maynard, Massachusetts. His family members were his parents, Walter and Kathleen, and his younger siblings Charlie, Walter, Kathleen, and Howard. During Grampy's childhood he lived in four different homes in three different towns.

When Grampy was eight years old, he was riding his bike and was hit by a car. Grampy was knocked unconscious for two days but did recover. The man who hit him felt bad and gave him \$500.00. The family bought their first refrigerator and Grampy bought a new bike. Previously, the family had an ice box.

It was Grampy's job to daily chore to empty the water tray. Another chore was to empty the ashes from the furnace. On Sundays, he would help his friend, Peter Grigas; deliver papers with his red wagon to the people on the route. As a child his mother did not have a car or license, so his mother would give him \$5.00 and told him to walk to the doctors by himself. His mother had four other children to care for. While his father was a milkman Grampy helped him wash out the milk bottles.

As a child he remembers all windows shaded and car headlights taped during World War II. His father did not have to serve overseas, but did volunteer as a civil watchman for his community. Grampy would collect tin cans during the war and bring the lard to the grocery store. He remembers being rationed for sugar and 1 lb. of butter per month. On VE Day there was a parade with an army tank, after the parade he and the other boys, sliced off a pieces of the rubber from the tank for a souvenirs. Then, they all went to Manning's Drugstore for free ice cream.

As a boy, Grampy belonged to many clubs such as The Boy Scouts, 4 H, Coop Camp and DeMolay. DeMolay was a boy's club run by the Masons. His father and grandfather were both Masons. In grammar school, John would have to walk to school every day, walk home for lunch, then back to school, and then home again. The town did not have school buses then.

Maynard did have three movie theaters, The Colonial Theater (9 cents admission), The Fine Arts Theater (25 cents admission), and the Peoples Theater. At seven years old he would go to the movies with his friends, the theaters would start with a "serial" for ten minutes about cowboys. Grampy's family did not have a TV or phone in the house. While Grampy was growing up he had many pets including kittens, bunnies, chickens and a dog, Heidi. Heidi was stolen and never found.

Grampy has had many friends throughout his life. He met Mark Waldron in first grade, Peter Grigas in third grade, John Coco, Bob Conowitz, Newton Saarineen, and Freddie Gould all in Jr. High. The seven of them," John Coco, Bob Conowitz, Newton Saarineen, and Freddie Gould" formed a group called "The Trolls". They were a well behaved group of boys and didn't get into trouble. All seven of them are still alive and friends today. After school the Trolls would go down to the Maynard Woolen Mills and holler to the workman to throw them the little empty wooden spools. The boys would run across the fence banging the spools making a racket.

During high school, Grampy worked at Arthur's Jewelry Store selling furniture and appliances. When John graduated from high school, he was accepted into MIT, but couldn't afford the \$2,000.00 tuition. There were no scholarships at that time, so he decided to enroll in the Air Force. Grampy was in the Air Force from 1955 – 1959, as the Chief aircraft and engine mechanic. Grampy was stationed in Vermont where he worked on fixing airplanes and the first jet airplane. The group of men he trained with was all sent to Korea. Grampy stayed in the US to teach, and he started a new Air Force base in Winooski, VT. There were always two planes and two mechanics at the ready to launch in two minutes. Grampy flew to Arizona to a rocket launch base where they kept the first B52 bombers. Dwight D. Eisenhower was president at the time, and the US was fighting North Korea.

After the Air Force, Grampy went to Lowell Textile Technical Institute (currently called UMass Lowell) from 1959 to 1963 and majored in physics. Tuition was \$100.00 per semester. While at college, he worked nights at General

Electric from 1960 to 1962. As a technician on steam turbine generator sets. His first job after college was at Chu Associates in Harvard, Massachusetts where he was a mathematician and designed antennas. Grampy's next job was at Dielectric Engineering in Littleton, MA. Later he became part owner of ERL (Electromagnetic Radiation Laboratory). Then John worked at Diamond Antenna in Woburn, MA. He was chief engineer at NEICO (New England Institute Company) on South St. in Hopkinton from 1970 to 1980, MACOM from 1980 to 1988, then back to NEICO till 1992 and then at Millitec in Northampton till 2001 when he retired.

Grampy met his wife, Betty, while playing poker with his friends, The Trolls, at Mark Waldron's house, Grammy was visiting Mark's wife and new infant. John and Betty married on August 24, 1963 at St George's Church, Maynard, Massachusetts. They first lived in an apartment in Littleton, where they had their first child, my mom, in 1966. My Grandparents moved to an apartment in Acton, and then bought their first house in 1969 when their second child was born, my Uncle Steve. Their third and final child, Samantha, was born in 1973. They still live in that house today.

My Grandfather has always loved his toys. His first car was a 1951 Chevy convertible that he bought in 1959, and his second car was a 1958 Oldsmobile convertible. His third car was a Corvair Monza convertible, and then he bought four door sedans after the children were born. My grandfather has always loved boats, so while his children were growing up, he bought the "Turtle" which was very safe and slow, and he bought the "Snipe" which was a racing boat. In 1999, he bought "Synergy" a 32 foot Cape Dory sailboat which he kept in Padanaram Harbor, South Dartmouth, MA and then in Biddeford Pool, Maine.

With those cars and boats, my grandfather has traveled to Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda. He has sailed to Nova Scotia for five days and sailed to Cape Bretton. On one of his trips to Cape Bretton, he helped rescue six people from another ship that was sinking.

It was August of 1985. There were three men sailing on the 36 foot sloop the Indulgence. Grampy was sailing with Lou Able the Captain, and Jerry Miller. They were sailing from Beverly, MA to Roque Island, ME. It was at twilight about

9:30 pm when they were taking star sights and noticed a ball of fire in the horizon. They didn't know what it was so they turned on the VHF radio and heard a distress call "mayday, cabin cruiser on fire, six people in the water". They immediately furled the sail, started the engine and set course for the ball of fire on the horizon. It took one and a half hours in four to six foot waves to reach the cabin cruiser. When they arrived the captain said "It was as if someone took a toy boat soaked it in gasoline and lit it on fire." They radioed to the coast guard that they were on the scene and asked how to assist the search to find the people. The coast guard said to go down wind to look for survivors, but they saw flair in the sky, took a bearing on it, and started in that direction. After sailing a while they noticed something red in the water, it was a piece of burning wood. They knew they were going in the right direction and figured they people would be further ahead. They started sweeping the water with flashlights for a while before they saw a small raft with two people inside and four people hanging onto the outside. Once all six people were aboard Indulgence, the crew realized the survivors were all soaking wet and had hypothermia. The survivors had been in the 55 degree water for two to three hours in the dark with six foot seas before being rescued. They gave them towels and dry clothes to wear. The Captain radioed to the Coast Guard to inform them that they had all six survivors. The Coast Guard instructed them to meet at the burning boat, but the boat quickly sank. It was 2:00 am when the Coast Guard finally found Indulgence. After the transfer was made, the crew never saw the survivors again or got their clothes back or received a thank you.

In 2001 my grandfather retired. Since Grampy retired he has taught navigation courses and belongs to the US Power Squadron. My grandfather spends summers in Maine on Synergy. He also spends a lot of time playing with his grandchildren.

One day, in the fall of 1983, my mom was researching which college to attend. She thought many of the colleges would be too expensive. Her dad (my grandfather) privately spoke to her and offered, "Whichever college you want to go to and get accepted into, I will pay for." My grandfather believed in obtaining

a good education. Grampy was trustworthy and held to his word, my mom was accepted into college, and he paid for it.

Other character traits of my grandfather are that he is caring, loving and kind! In January, 2000, my parents went to my grandparents' house to announce they were having a baby, me! As my father started to announce that they were expecting a baby, my grandfather ran upstairs, grabbed the antique family bassinet and ran downstairs before my dad could finish his sentence. My grandfather was so excited that his first grandchild was arriving.

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A special time I spent with my grandfather was a year ago when my parents went away on vacation for a week, and my grandparents came to stay and take care of my sister and me. During that week, every day Grampy would get up and help get ready for school in the morning. He would always be on time to pick us up from school. After school, Grampy would help us do our homework. While doing the homework, if we had any questions, Grampy would help us answer them. We often got side-tracked. When we were side-tracked he would tell us about little facts on the subject we were side-tracked on. Grampy was very kind because he would always check to see if I was feeling and doing well. If I had any after school activities, he would always bring me to them on time. When we had free time, we would often build projects such as Legos or math projects. If there were any questions he did not know how to answer, we would research it on the computer. Grampy was incredibly kind, loving, helpful, dependable, and fun the week my parents were away.

During this Elder Tea project I have learned many interesting facts and stories about my grandfather's life and childhood. The Elder Tea project has helped me picture what my grandfather's life was like growing up as a little boy.

## Transistor

Something that amazes my elder is the transistor invented in 1947. A transistor is a tool that takes in energy and is able to control the output of that energy. The transistor takes the place of a glass tube, but tubes were slower, larger, less reliable, and more expensive. A transistor is important to John because it's in almost all of his and every one's electronic devices. Without transistors our devices would be very slow and large. At first John hadn't realized the convenience of a transistor. John's first transistor was in his first "Transistor Radio". He also had transistors in his hand held calculators or any other electronic devices he owns.

It is amazing to my grandfather because with the binary system (0 & 1), transistors switch on and off one million times the speed of light. The transistor has a bias, it can control how much energy is being put out of the transistor but not in. The transistor amazes him because it is the size of a period and controls millions of decisions each second.