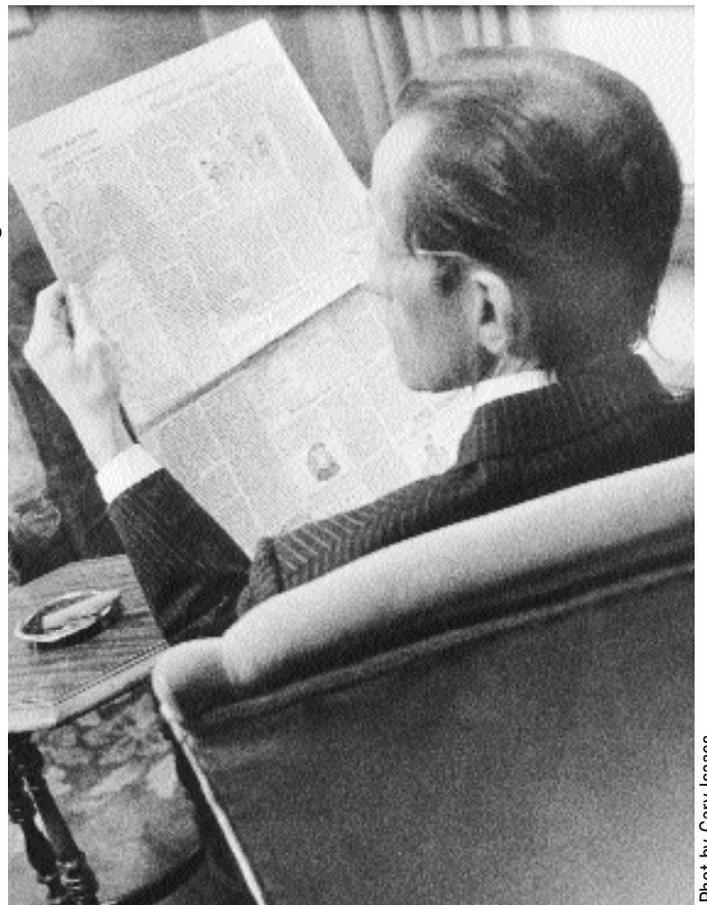


# Life With Father

Dramatized by Russel Crouse & Howard Lindsay  
From Clarence Day Jr.'s book, *Life With Father*  
March 13-April 13, 1997



Phot by Gary Isaacs



## Study Guide

prepared by the Education Department of the Denver Center Theatre Company  
and contributing writer Sally R. Gass.



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# ***LIFE WITH FATHER***

## **SYNOPSIS**

**“A man has to be sure of his facts and figures. He has to reason things out. Now—you take a woman—a woman thinks—no, I’m wrong right there—she doesn’t think at all. She just gets stirred up.”**  
—*Life With Father*, p76.

So says Clarence Day Jr., the lovably irascible patriarch of *Life With Father* as he strives to control his family four young sons and his wife, Vinnie - in their Madison Avenue brownstone in “turn of the century” New York City. Clarence chides Vinnie about her housekeeping accounts and his blustering tantrums at the breakfast table have cost the Days many a maid. But when the Reverend Dr. Lloyd pays a visit and Clarence reveals he has never been baptized, Vinnie is fueled by a new mission. Although her husband argues, “They can’t keep me out of Heaven on a technicality,” she won’t be satisfied until this “technicality” is corrected.

*Life With Father* is a period piece. It portrays an age when: life was simpler; the pace was slower; material goods were cheaper; and married couples stayed together. It is a portrait of family life at a time when middle class families could afford servants and it includes the little incidents that agitate a man like the impatient, short-tempered Clarence Day Jr. as he attempts to run his home like his business. When the morning coffee is not to his liking or the newspaper contains disturbing news, he rages like a brief summer squall. But when a real crisis occurs, he is shaken, sympathetic, anxious and supportive.

In this portrait we see four sons, who, despite the idiosyncrasies of their mother and the irascibility of their father, unconditionally love, respect and obey their parents. We also see a patient wife, who despite her husband’s domestic befuddlement and irritability, cajoles him, charms him, and loves him. Though father often likes to think he’s in charge, Mother usually gets her way. The tale has an everlasting familial ring to it. After all mother knows best!

Produced in 1939, *Life With Father* enjoyed a run of nearly 8 years, making it the longest running non-musical play in American theatrical history. During its run, psychiatrists who saw it came backstage claiming the play offered great therapeutic value for a country gripped by another World War. “Young people reveled in it because they saw in it their elders in a state of perpetual strife and uproar. The older generation summed it up as “the promptings of memory.” Audiences were transported into a world of security and the same people came to see it again and again.”<sup>1</sup>

**“But, Clare, life would be pretty dull if we always knew what was coming.”**  
—Vinnie, *Life With Father*, p129.

## THE PLAYWRIGHTS

The American playwriting/producing team of Howard Lindsay (1889-1968) and Russel Crouse (1893-1966) co-authored and produced an unbroken string of successful comedies. Their partnership was notable both for its continued success and for the way each complemented the other's talents.

Prior to meeting Crouse, Lindsay had already gained experience as an actor, director and playwright, traveling for 42 weeks in a production of *Polly of the Circus*. Crouse started as a journalist, but found time to write the libretto for *The Gang's All Here* (1931) which ran for two weeks. He also wrote several nostalgic books about 19th-Century America.

While trying to salvage a play in 1933, producer Vinton Freedley paired the talents of Lindsay and Crouse. The result was *Anything Goes* (1934) and a partnership that would expand and mature over several decades. Their longest running drama was *Life With Father*, based on Clarence Day Jr.'s book. It ran for 3,213 performances and starred Lindsay as Father opposite his real-life wife, Dorothy Stickney, in the role of Vinnie. When Lindsay and Crouse were offered *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1940, they ventured into theatrical production, and found more success. The pair won the Pulitzer Prize in drama in 1946 for *State of the Union*, a satire of American politics. Sections of the play had to be rewritten every day to correspond with current events. They also collaborated on the librettos for *Call Me Madam* and *The Sound of Music*.

The universal appeal of Lindsay and Crouse's work was born of the unique coupling of Lindsay's theatrical knowledge and Crouse's sharp wit. Together their gifts transformed the ideas of others into extremely popular musicals and plays.



## THE GILDED AGE IN AMERICA

“Gild: 1. to cover with or as if with a thin layer of gold.

2. to give an often deceptively attractive or improved appearance.

3. to adorn unnecessarily some thing already beautiful.”

—*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.*

**T**he term “The Gilded Age” (circa 1869-1900) was coined from the title of a novel by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, published in 1873. The book lampooned lobbyists, swindlers and politicians whose price tags showed, and targeted those who found their wealth quickly and easily in the post-Civil War boom. Their hope was to show that beneath the monied sheen lay important issues of industrial production, westward expansion, urban growth, and immigration.

Wealth dominated this period of history— the kind that paid for its say in society and influenced the entire social stratum. The benefactors of this socio-economic class endowed churches and colleges, libraries and journals— and not incidentally, political campaigns.

**T**his was the age of the robber barons—a newly rich and opulent plutocracy. Names that became synonymous with entire industries were those of John D. Rockefeller (oil), Andrew Carnegie (steel), Gustavus Swift (meat packing), Charles Pillsbury (grain milling), Henry Havemeyer (sugar), Cornelius Vanderbilt (railroads) and John Pierpont Morgan (banking.) These men exercised more influence than any politician, for unlike the politicians, who merely spun words, the robber barons made their success as silent men of action. Their secret lay in an intelligence that amounted to vision and a greed that was fueled by commercial foresight.

The impact of big business on politicians was seen not merely in legislation passed, but in the

lives of the politicians themselves. One of the most notorious was New York's William Marcy "Boss" Tweed of Tammany Hall who went on to become Mayor of the city in the late 1860s. He made millions of dollars selling licenses, franchises, and contracts. Twenty years after Boss Tweed, Richard Croker was the keeper of the till. His cut from the underworld, collected by his assistants, always included "a piece of the action" for himself from the overpriced contracts for municipal improvements.

**N**ationally, Senator James Gillespie Blaine from Maine grew fat (both physically and financially) from fees and commissions paid by certain railroads—the same railroads that found his help on the Senate floor. Evidence of the corruption, contained in a packet of letters, was insufficient to indict Blaine, but the incident tainted him enough to make voters distrustful.

In 1884, Blaine received the Republican Party's Presidential nomination, pitting him against Democratic candidate, Governor Grover Cleveland of New York. High-minded Republicans deserted Blaine in droves, until it was disclosed that Cleveland, as a busy young bachelor lawyer in Buffalo, had fathered a child out of wedlock. It became the most lurid American presidential campaign to date. The choice was dreadful: Blaine, who had violated the accepted public ethic of the time versus Cleveland, whose immoral act had violated the Victorian code, making him unfit for "decent"



society. The voters pondered and the election went to Cleveland by a close margin. The historical significance of the victory is still debated.

**B**etween 1865 and 1901, the American Industrial

Revolution transformed the United States from a country of small, isolated communities scattered across three million square miles of territory into an economically integrated industrial unit. The railroads were instrumental to this development. The Central Pacific and the Union Pacific railroads joined forces to erect the first transcontinental line in 1865. Other significant lines that were constructed include: the Northern Pacific in 1883, and the Great Northern in 1893.

The other important factor in bringing our nation together was the invention of communication technology. Thomas Alva Edison and Alexander Graham Bell recognized the need for the transmission of light and sound. Edison improved the telegraph, invented the phonograph, the incandescent light bulb and the motion picture; while Bell invented the telephone. Both men's advances made a significant impact on New York City. In 1878, J. P. Morgan financed the Edison Electric Light Company and, by 1881 his company was laying the mains for a central power station in Manhattan. In 1882, Edison switched on electric lights in the "House of Morgan", the New York Stock Exchange, and in the *New York Times* and *New York Herald* buildings. Bell conceived the idea of the telephone in 1874 and by 1878 had established the first commercial telephone switchboard in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1885, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company was formed and by 1899 there was one telephone for every 66 people.

Other advancing technologies gave New York City the elevated railroad in 1878, and the Brooklyn Bridge (one of the first great suspension bridges) in 1883. The Gilded Age also saw breakthroughs in journalism. Charles A. Dana made the *New York Sun* into a spicy paper full of good, inquisitive reporting and Dana-written editorials. In 1883, Joseph Pulitzer bought the defunct *New York World* and filled it with sensational reporting, comic strips, color sections, advice columns and big, screaming headlines. The Age brought its own culture. Historian John Fiske applied Herbert Spencer's theory of Social Darwinism to the United States in his book, *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. Fiske enthralled



millions with the belief that America was the finest end product of evolution. He posited that “survival of the fittest” sanctioned the order of millionaires and laborers, big cities and big spending. This moral justification for the accumulation of wealth ran through the dozens of novels published by Horatio Alger, beginning in 1867. In them, poor boys were always given one lucky break and then, by their virtue and sobriety, made themselves into models of financial success.

**T**he three greatest novelists to emerge in this age were Henry James, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells. James spent most of his life abroad focusing on the interaction between Europeans and Americans; his upper-class characters scarcely knew of such things as factories, plows, guns or butcher’s bills. Mark Twain was, in the words of Howells, “the Lincoln of our literature.” In books like *Innocents Abroad* and *Huckleberry Finn*, he spoke of a yearning for what was fresh and unspoiled and, at the same time, for the success that would spoil it. Howells’ novels depicted the lives of the middle class and the moral dilemmas found in the seas of temptation and vice. While Twain and Howells expressed unhappiness with what America had become, the poet Walt Whitman wrote his odes to the common man, democracy, the land, the beauty of work and tools. Whitman’s poetry gave a voice to the hustling mood of the Gilded Age.

**A**rtists in America ceased imitating the classic and romantic models of Europe and turned to native subjects. Winslow Homer first painted scenes of the Civil War battlefield for the magazine *Harper’s Weekly*; later he portrayed the changing moods of the New England seacoast. Thomas Eakins delved deeply into studies of anatomy to perfect his figures; the results are evidenced in paintings like “The Swimming Hole.” Albert Pinkham Ryder specialized in striking effects of depth and density. His paintings such as “Toilers of the Sea,” are filled with mysterious and haunting images that suggest an unexpected reality lurking behind the one we see.

**A**rt and engineering combined in the 1880’s and 1890’s to produce a new kind of architecture. The development of the electric elevator and cheap steel made possible the skyscraper. The first was the Home Insurance Building in Chicago, designed by William LeBaron Jenney in 1885. Other architects, such as Daniel Burnham, John Root, and Louis Sullivan, struck out to design buildings that would express the possibilities of the new age.

The 30-year period that ended the 19th century was the highway from an earlier, simpler America to the one we know today. It was a time when materialism and science flowered, when technological and physical expansion dazzled those who witnessed it. Such expansion led to an ostentation that advertised to the world a kind of victory for the “democratic experiment.” In the race for riches, opportunity beckoned and around every corner lay the promised land of streets paved with gold, even if that gold became nothing more than gilt.

**“To gild refined gold, to paint the lily...is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”  
-Shakespeare, *King John*, Act IV, scene 2.**

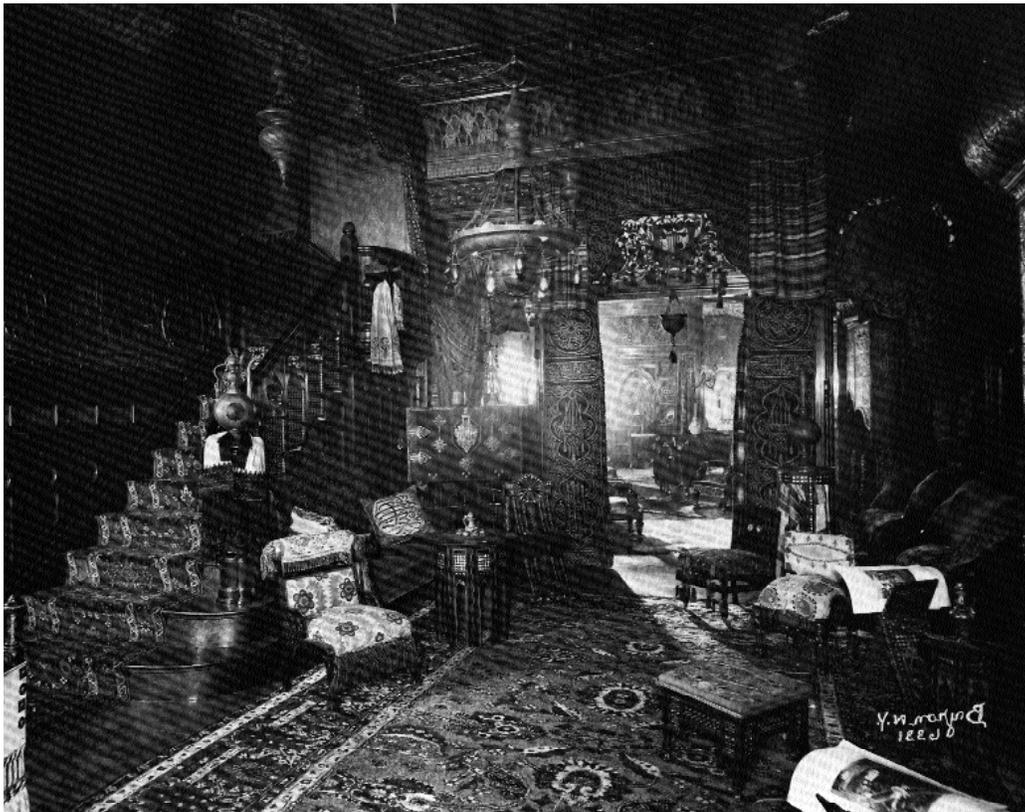
# ~ETIQUETTE~

**“Nothing, at first sight, seems less important than the external formalities of human behavior, yet there is nothing to which men attach more importance.”**  
—Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

**I**n his book, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in 19th Century Urban America*, John F. Kasson contends that many of the standards for manners we assume to be age-old originated in the 19th century. The desire for respectability, the rise of the affluent, and correct appearance over ostentation grew into a social code that became almost mandatory.

**M**anners appropriate to a democratic society were of keen interest in America from the time of independence onward. The issue was an important aspect of the great transformation created by the rise of the urban-industrial, capitalistic society of the 19th century. The new and growing metropolises called for changes in the notions of social relationships, appropriate behavior, and individual identity. These changes were evidenced by the profusion of etiquette manuals published between 1830 and the turn of the century. Aimed at broad readership, they were written by a variety of editors, publishers, popular writers, and leaders of fashionable society. They offered a picture of the standards that governed social interaction in the expanding and influential urban bourgeois culture.

“Genteel” and “gentility” were key words in the 19th century. These words were typically associated with the well-born, but the egalitarian thrust of the American Revolution gave these words new meaning for an emerging middle class. The manufacture of more goods fed a rising need. The growth of technology, particularly electricity and communication, changed domestic life and aspira-



tions. Consequently, gentility became increasingly available as a style and commodity. An extensive middle class market quickly developed for mass-produced imitations of costly luxuries such as New Haven clocks, Lowell carpets, upholstered sofas, among others. Meanwhile, etiquette writers joined a host of other advisors in teaching the “respectability” seekers what to do with their new purchases. Their innovations included such newly-defined “necessities” as frequent bathing and meticulous grooming; new standards for the deportment of both domestic and

formal dining; the furnishing and function of rooms, the administration of servants, the proper conduct for shopping, business and social exchange; the details of public deportment in the big city.

The changing use of the fork is an example of the new refinement. Through the first half of the 19th century, most table forks were made of iron or steel with two sharp prongs. One held such a fork in the left hand and, after cutting a piece of food, raised the morsel upward with the fork still in the left, then used the flat rounded blade of the knife in the right hand to put the food in the mouth. But as the two-tined fork gave way to forks with three, then four tines (often of silver), the cumbersome American practice developed of transferring the fork from left to right after cutting a piece of food and then raising it to the mouth. “Not ‘You are what you eat’, but ‘You are how you eat’ became the maxim of the refined.” <sup>2</sup>

**S**ome etiquette writers expressed a concern with instituting an American code of manners somewhat akin to laws. Consider this passage:  
***“A nation is a number of people associated together for common purposes, and no one questions the right of those people to make laws for themselves; society is also an organized association, and has a perfect right to make laws which shall be binding upon all of its members. Now, what are called the rules of politeness are nothing more than the customs or laws of good society and no one[should feel himself wronged] if this society refuses him admission until he has made himself fully acquainted with its laws.”***

—Timothy Howard, *Excelsior*, (Baltimore: Kelly and Put, 1869.) <sup>3</sup>

It was not a far leap from etiquette as law to etiquette as emotional control. Though the home was looked upon as a sanctuary of purity, harmony and affection, it was also a place of preparation for social performance where family members rehearsed the roles they would perform in public life. “Constant practice, eternal vigilance, is the price of good manners,” an 1890 etiquette guide declared. “...The surest way of doing a thing right is to have the habit of doing it right on all occasions, in private, as well as in public... .” <sup>4</sup> Clarence Day Jr. may not have agreed, if his outbursts in *Life With Father* are any indication of an opinion on the subject.

**T**he 20th century saw the blurring of class lines as well as mass production for mass consumption. The new economy and culture conferred greater importance as consumers on women, the working classes and ethnic groups. As more “have-nots” became “haves,” the efforts to achieve a common code of public conduct—the dream of the 19th century advisors—seemed less and less attainable.

**“For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.”**

—Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, Guinevere, I. 333.

**P**erhaps Vinnie could have found some fulfillment and vented some frustration in the women’s suffrage movement. The struggle to achieve equal rights for women is often thought to have begun, in the English-speaking world, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). During the 19th century, as male suffrage was gradually extended in many countries, women became increasingly active in the quest for their own suffrage. Not until 1893, however, in New Zealand, did women achieve suffrage on the national level. Australia followed in 1902, but American, British and Canadian women did not win the same rights until the end of World War I.

# THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

**Appearances were often hopelessly against Mother (Vinnie), but that never daunted her. She wasn't afraid of Father or anybody. She was a woman of great spirit who would have flown at and pecked any tyrant."**

**—Clarence Day Jr., *Life With Father*, p103.**

**T**he demand for the enfranchisement of American women was first seriously formulated at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. After the Civil War, agitation by women for the ballot became increasingly vociferous. In 1869, however, a rift developed among feminists over the proposed 15th Amendment, which gave the vote to black men. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others refused to endorse the amendment because it did not give women the ballot. Other suffragists, however, including Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, argued that once the black man was enfranchised, women would achieve their goal. As a result of the conflict, two organizations emerged. Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association to work for suffrage on the federal level and to press for more extensive institutional changes, such as the granting of property rights to married women. Stone created the American Women Suffrage Association which aimed to secure the ballot through state legislation.

**H**owever, in the late 19th century, the women's movement languished because in this period of conservative self-interest known as the Gilded Age, there was little anguish to generate a surge for women's rights. The efforts to achieve women's suffrage were nearly ineffectual in this decade. Instead, women turned their energies toward reform in other areas. The growing commercialism and industrialization had created blighted districts in cities where the working-class poor lived. These poor lived in abandoned homes that were obtained, subdivided and rented to the families of workers living on salaries that were absurdly low. In New York, the tenement, or multiple dwelling, housed up to 60 or more people who might share one toilet or one water tap. The



inhabitants, mostly immigrants, made up the little Italies, Bohemias and Polands of New York. These areas were classified as slums. These living situations of the poor led to aid from settlement workers, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the suffragettes.

**B**etween 1880 and 1890, it became increasingly evident that the factors which brought about the existence of two separate suffrage associations were diminishing in importance. So in 1890 the two groups united under the banner of the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). In the same year, Wyoming entered the Union, becoming the first state with general women's suffrage. The perseverance of women and their leaders paid off and eventually led to victory. On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment granted the vote to American women.

## THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

**"Whoever said that death and taxes are the only inevitable things in life was overlooking an obvious third one: family."**

**—William J. Doherty, *Psychology Today*, May/June 1992.**

**F**ather wanted a simple predictable life with a smoothly running household and a family whose activities fit in with his ideas.

**We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men and women are created equal."**  
**—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, First Women's Rights Convention, Seneca Falls, N. Y., 1848**

When Vinnie became ill or the boys misbehaved, he became positively undone because his notion of family was disturbed. Thus, he would probably be appalled by today's changes in the structure of the American family!

The family is called the basic social institution. Not only is the family universal, but a specific form of it—the nuclear family—comes close to being a worldwide phenomenon. The term “nuclear family” refers to two adults of opposite sex living with their own or adopted children. It is the familiar unit of a working father, a mother who stays home, and their children; a situation much like the Day family of *Life With Father* in the 1880s. This family structure remained fairly intact up to the 1950s, and TV shows like *Leave It to Beaver* and *Ozzie and Harriet* made a traditional family look loving, supportive and successful. Many parents of today compare their turbulent, hectic lives with those of a fictionalized past and find their own situations much different.

**T**oday, over 70% of America's families are non-traditional. The most common family type is composed of either a two-career married couple and their children or a single parent and his or her children. Stepfamilies are also increasingly common. In addition to these types, a minority of Americans—homosexual couples with children, grandparents raising grandchildren, communal families—have broadened the definition of “family” still further.

While some sociologists believe the traditional family is obsolete or at least in decline, others believe the family is in transition. The family is, as are other institutions, reflecting widespread social change. According to Dennis K. Orthner, basic family values have not changed, but the norms of family behavior have. Family roles—mother, father, son, daughter—are no longer defined by larger societal norms. Instead, each role is customized and defined within the particular family system. <sup>5</sup> An example would be the “house husband” who cares for the home and family while the wife works.

Other sociologists believe the definition of family is expanding. Marciano and Sussman believe in the concept of “wider families” which emerge from lifestyle. <sup>6</sup> It is a bonding of people which comes into existence for economic and/or emotional concerns, or because of activities and interests. Services, exchanges, help, caring, advice and emotional support can be found in these wider families when traditional family resources are unavailable. Wider families are somewhat akin to the ideas in Hillary Clinton's book, *It Takes a Village*, and could be expressed by this poem:

**You-all means a race or section,  
Family, party, tribe, or clan;  
You-all means the whole connection  
Of the individual man.”  
—Anonymous**

# FATHER DAY'S NEW YORK CITY

“It couldn't have happened anywhere but in little old New York.”

—O. Henry, “*A Little Local Color.*”

**T**he Day family lived in a brownstone at 48th and Madison Avenue in Midtown Manhattan, where the Bank of China stands today. To reach his office at No. 38 Wall Street, Father took the 6th Avenue elevated train downtown. The train was powered by coal and if the smoke from the engine did not obscure the view, he could see the rows of red brick tenements that housed the immigrant poor.

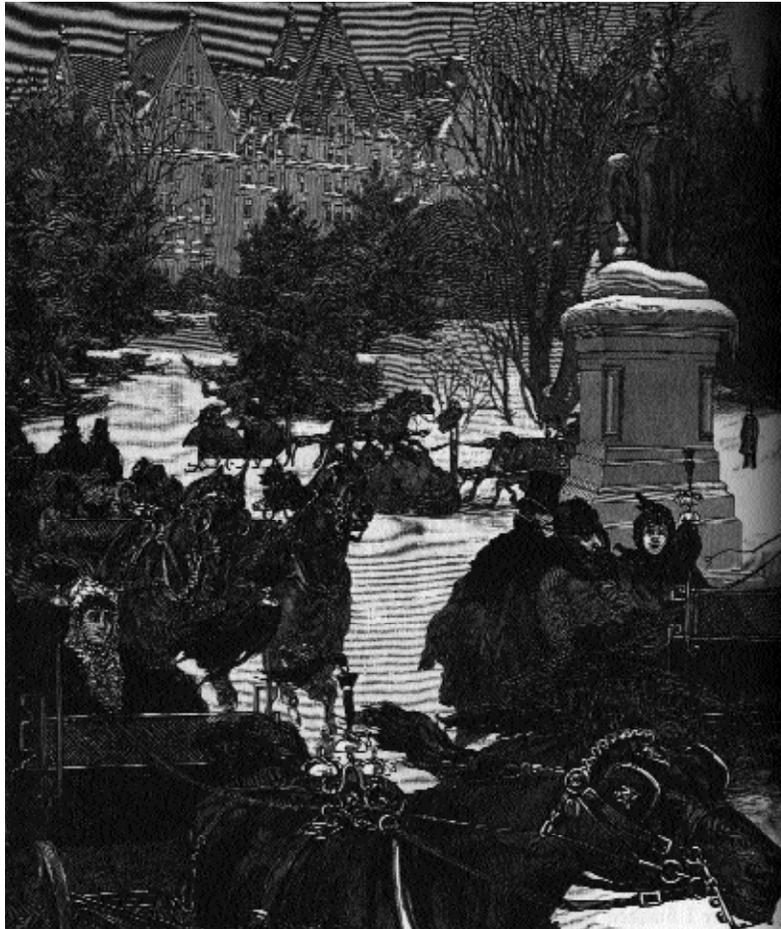
As he rode, Father could get a glimpse of the first skyscrapers in New York City. The skyscraper was made possible by the invention of the elevator by Elisha Graves Otis in 1853. The first passenger elevator was installed by Otis in the Haughwout Building, a department store at the corner of Broadway and Broome, streets in 1857. These early skyscrapers included an office building on Battery Park, 1883; the Potter Building on Park Row built between 1883 and 1886; the *New York Tribune* newspaper building built in 1873-74; and the *New York World* building erected between 1889-90 for Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper. Father could also see the city's first apartment house, Rutherford Stuyvesant's building on East 18th Street.

**W**hen Father took the family and his guests to dinner, they went to Delmonico's, the best known restau-

rant in the United States in the 19th century. It was first located at 21-25 Williams Street, but after fire destroyed the building, it moved to Broadway and 26th Street in 1876. The restaurant created such innovations as “baked Alaska” and “lobster Newburg” and hosted such celebrities as Charles Dickens and Diamond Jim Brady.

Delmonico's closed in 1923 when Prohibition and the subsequent ban on the sale of liquor put a crimp in its business.

For enjoyment Father liked to go horseback-riding in Central Park. The Park's 840 acres were planned by Frederick Law Olmstead and extended from 58th street to 110th Street, and from 5th Avenue to Central Park West. On his way to the Park, Father passed Park Avenue, a great boulevard of buildings with style and discipline where the near-rich lived. If he walked to 5th Avenue and 65th Street, he



could admire the mansion of Caroline Schermerhorn Astor, the social doyenne of her times. Her moves in New York society broke the geographical barriers and led the wealthy to the promised land of upper 5th Avenue. Father could also see the roof of The Dakota Apartments (1884), the city's first luxury apartment house, which dominated Central Park before the park drives were paved. It has been a prestigious address (Andrew Carnegie resided there in the 19th century and John Lennon in the 20th) since the days when that part of the city was thought

to be out in the Dakota territory.

**A**s for theatre, up to the 1890s, all of 40th to 50th Streets west of 7th Avenue was written off as Hell's Kitchen, a seething mixture of factories and tenements where even the police moved in pairs. Big things happened quickly when Charles Frohman opened a theater at 40th Street and Broadway. Oscar Hammerstein did him one better in 1895 by opening the Olympia, a block long palace on Broadway between 44th and 45th Streets, with a concert hall, music hall and theatre in it. Thus, Times Square was born.

**“New York, New York, it’s a helluva town;  
The Bronx is up and the Battery’s down----  
The people ride in a hole in the ground-----”**  
—Betty Comden and Adolph Greene, “New York, New York,” *On the Town*.

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## **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: 1895-1905**

- 1895 Supreme Court declares income tax unconstitutional in Pollack v. Farmers Loan and Trust Company.  
Cuba fights Spain for its independence.  
Turks massacre Armenians.  
Stephen Crane publishes *The Red Badge of Courage*.  
Oscar Wilde writes *The Importance of Being Earnest*.  
H.G. Wells publishes *The Time Machine*.  
Louis Lumiere give first public showing of a movie.  
Pneumatic (air-filled) rubber tires are produced.  
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad begins using electric locomotives.  
Marconi invents the wireless telegraph.  
Rontgen discovers x-rays.  
Black Baptist groups merge to form the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.  
Sears and Roebuck opens a mail-order business.  
First professional football game played.
- 1896 Utah becomes 45th state.  
Supreme Court rules that “separate but equal” facilities for whites and blacks are constitutional. Ruling marks start of “Jim Crow” era, legalizing segregation.  
William McKinley elected president.  
Italians sign Treaty of Addis Ababa, recognizing the independence of Ethiopia.  
Earthquake and tidal wave kill about 27,000 in Japan.  
Sousa composes “The Stars and Stripes Forever.”  
Puccini composes “La Boheme.”  
Chekhov writes *The Seagull*.  
Nobel prizes are established for achievements in physics, physiology and medicine, chemistry, literature, and peace.  
Motion pictures are introduced into vaudeville shows.  
Successful offshore oil wells are drilled near Santa Barbara, California.  
Henri Becquerel, Fr. Physicist, discovers radioactivity.  
“Book” matches become popular.  
Rural, free mail delivery is established.
- 1897 Supreme Court declares that an association of 18 railroads to set transportation rates is a violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.  
Henri Matisse paints the “The Dinner Table.”  
Rostand produces *Cyrano de Bergerac*.  
Bram Stoker publishes *Dracula*.

- 1897 Freud defines the “Oedipus complex” and the importance of dreams.  
 First practical subway is completed in Boston.  
 Marconi establishes the Wireless Telegraph Company.  
 Severe famine in India.
- 1898 U.S. battleship Maine arrives at Havana Cuba and is blown up in the harbor.  
 McKinley signs congressional resolution declaring Cuba independent and authorizes use of Army and Navy to force Spain to leave Cuba.  
 U.S. forces defeat Spanish forces at Guantanamo Bay, El Caney, and San Jual Hill in Cuba.  
 Social Democratic Party is formed in Russia.  
 The “Boxers,” an anti-foreign organization, is established in China.  
 S. Lanier publishes *Music and Poetry* which argues for music education at universities.  
 The National Institute of Arts and Letters is founded.  
 Wells publishes *The War of the Worlds*.  
 Argonaut II is the first submarine to travel in open seas.  
 Tesla demonstrates a remote-controlled boat.  
 Marie Curie discovers the elements polonium and radium and coins the term radioactivity.  
 First Food & Drug Act is passed because of low quality of meat supplied to U.S. troops fighting the Spanish-American War.
- 1899 Congress ratifies the Treaty of Paris.  
 U.S. participates in first peace conference at The Hague with 25 other nations.  
 South African (Boer) War begins between British and Boers over territorial and political rights.  
 “Maple Leaf Rag” by composer Scott Joplin.  
 America’s first tuberculosis hospital opens in Denver, Colorado.  
 Although it has been used for centuries, aspirin is introduced as a “modern” medicine.  
 President McKinley is the first president to ride in an automobile.
- 1900 Gold Standard Act passed, making other forms of money redeemable in gold.  
 Foraker Act declares Puerto Rico an unorganized territory and establishes a civil government.  
 Hawaii is made a territory of the U.S.  
 McKinley is re-elected with Theodore Roosevelt as Vice-president.  
 Spain and France sign treaty defining the borders of Spanish Guinea.  
 Baum publishes *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.  
 Beatrix Potter writes *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.  
 Work begins on New York subway.  
 Fessenden transmits spoken words by radio waves.  
 There are more than 1 million miles of telephone lines in the U.S.  
 Teisserenc de Bort suggests that the atmosphere is divided into the troposphere and the stratosphere.  
 Discovery that blood is made up of different blood types.  
 U.S. population is 75.9 million.  
 Life expectancy is 48 years for males and 51 years for females.  
 American baseball league founded.
- 1901 President McKinley shot by an anarchist.  
 U.S. citizenship is granted to the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles.  
 Second Hay-Pauncefote Treaty gives the U.S. the right to build, operate, and fortify a canal across the Isthmus of Panama.  
 First significant oil strike in Texas at Spindletop, near Beaumont.  
 Commonwealth of Australia is created.  
 Queen Victoria dies.  
 Shaw publishes *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

- 1902 President Roosevelt is given authority to retain public lands for public use as parks.  
Maryland passes the first state workmen's compensation law.  
Congress establishes the Census Bureau.  
Arthur James Balfour becomes British Prime Minister.  
Owen Wister publishes *The Virginian*.  
Frank Lloyd Wright, architect, completes the Ward Willitts House, IL, first of his "prairie style" homes.  
Doyle publishes *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.  
Conrad publishes *Heart of Darkness*.  
Gorki writes *The Lower Depths*.
- 1903 Hay-Burnau-Varilla Treaty signed giving U.S. a 10-mile strip of land across Panama for \$10 million  
and an annual payment of \$250,000.  
Panama proclaims itself an independent republic.  
French Congo is divided into four colonies: Gabon, Chad, Ubangi-Shari, and Middle Congo.  
*Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* written.  
Richard Stieff designs the first teddy bears named after President Theodore Roosevelt.  
Henry Ford organizes and becomes president of the Ford Motor Company.  
First Pacific cable opens. Pres. Roosevelt sent a message around the world; it came back to him in 12  
minutes.  
Orville and Wilbur Wright launch the world's first successful manned flight in a motorized airplane at  
Kitty hawk, N.C.  
First trip by automobile across the U.S. is completed.  
First Tour de France.
- 1904 Russo-Japanese war starts.  
France concludes a secret treaty with Spain to partition Morocco.  
Treaty between Bolivia and Chile ends with the War of the Pacific.  
Theodore Roosevelt is elected president.  
President Rafael Reye becomes President of Colombia.  
O. Henry publishes *Cabbages and Kings* a collection of stories about Latin America.  
Christ of the Andes, a huge bronze statue designed by Mateo Alonzo is dedicated as a symbol of  
peace between Chile and Argentina.  
London Symphony Orchestra gives its first performance.  
Diesel engines are brought to America.  
Perrine discovers the sixth moon of Jupiter.  
First perfect major league game pitched by Cy Young of Boston Americans.  
Frank J. Marshall of Brooklyn wins international masters' chess tournament without losing a game.  
Jiu-jitsu is popularized in U.S. by President Roosevelt.  
Woman arrested in NYC for smoking a cigarette in an automobile.  
First Olympic games held in U.S. as part of Exposition in St. Louis, MO, U.S. wins 21 events.
- 1905 Workers petitioning Czar Nicholas II are fired upon by Russian Troops ("Bloody Sunday").  
Number of registered automobiles rises to 77,988; as compared to only 300 ten years earlier.  
A famous trio is formed by Spanish cellist Pablo Casals.  
Lowell predicts the existence of ("Planet X") beyond Neptune.  
McClung determines that females have "XX" sex chromosomes while males have "XY".  
Crile performs the first direct blood transfusion.  
Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for babies teeth is shown to contain morphine.  
Albert Einstein proposes the theory of relativity and the equation  $E=MC$  squared.  
Alberta and Saskatchewan become provinces in Canada.  
Native uprising breaks out in the French Congo.

**Notes:**

1. Skinner, p182.
2. Kasson, p.193.
3. Kasson, p.60.
4. Kasson, p.163.
5. Orthner, p29.
6. Marciano and Sussman, p42.

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## ACTIVITIES

1. Compare today's middle-class family with the Day family. What has changed and what remains the same in a typical American middle-class family?
  - A. Research the changing structure of the American Family.
    1. What percentage have two working parents in the home?
    2. What percentage have children who work after school?
    3. What percentage have a two-parent home?
    4. How has the mother's role changed since the 1880s - 1890s? The father's role?
    5. If you have brothers, or sisters, what do you argue or fight about? Compare your disagreements with those of the Day brothers.
    6. Compare your breakfast time and menu with the Day's. How is it the same/different?
2. Research some important inventions/inventors of the 19th century. Some would include: Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Guglielmo Marconi. Why are their inventions important?
3. Research the skyscraper. How has it changed since the 1880s - 1890s? Look up Elisha Otis, Daniel Burnham Hoyt, Louis Sullivan, Stanford White, and see what their contributions were.
4. Compare the Day family to TV families seen on such programs as: *Rosanne*, *Step by Step*, *Party of Five*, *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, *Grace Under Fire*, *Married-With Children*, *The Simpsons*, etc.
5. What everyday things were used in the 1880's - 1890's that are not used today: in transportation, dress, meals, medicine, houses, etc.?
  - A. Make a collage of items we take for granted that the Day family never dreamed of having.
6. Compare how Vinnie shopped for household purchases with how your family shops.

7. Compare the benefits and drawbacks of living in the 1880's and today. For example, medicine (modern benefit) and bad air (modern drawback).

8. Enclosed is an excerpt from a children's etiquette book. Are manners or codes of conduct important today? How so?

## ~CHILDREN'S ETIQUETTE~

The passion for proper appearance extended even to children. Here are some excerpts from *Children's Etiquette*, written by Mrs. S. D. Power in 1877:



*"I hope you know enough already not to grow fidgety if your mother and a visitor talk to each other instead of you. Don't break into the conversation with something of your own that has nothing to do with what they are saying." p17.*

*"Every boy and girl should stand so as to have a good balance that no one brushing past can disturb them, and that standing will tire them less. To this end turn out your feet as far as you can, one foot an inch or two further forward than the other, resting the weight on the ball of the foot as well as the heel, and keeping the knees stiff. Brace them as if trying to bend the joint backward, and keep them so. You will feel as if you had hold of your knees, and in this way you can stand in a swaying horse-car, or railway car, or on ship, with three times the steadiness of the common, loose-jointed way." p29.*

*"What shall you do with your hands? Trousers' pockets are not the place for them in company, and little girls have no pockets for them. I forgot, but does it look well to see a girl always carrying her hands in the pockets of her apron or jacket? It will do once in a while, among one's mates, but it is rather free and easy for a regular habit." p33.*

1. Write you own etiquette pointers for the year 2000. Include behavior at home, at school, at a party, at church.

2. How would Father Day react if:

- a) you wrecked the car?
- b) you flunked a class?
- c) you stayed out too late?
- d) you went to see an NC-17 movie?