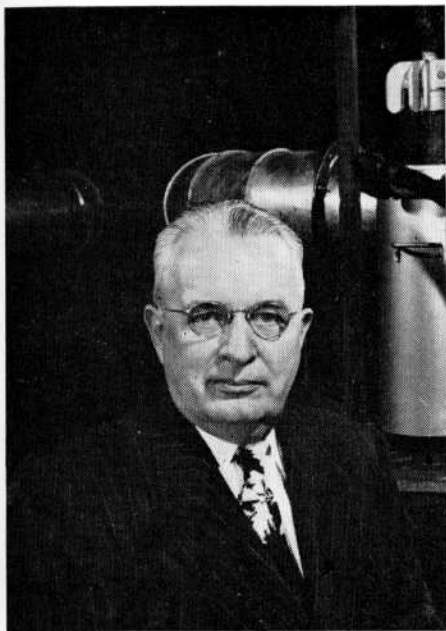


# Sooner Portraits



LLOYD J. HIBBARD

## Tornado, Texas and Tubes

(The following are excerpts from a profile of Lloyd J. Hibbard, '14eng, who played an important part in the development of a rectifier locomotive for the Westinghouse Corporation. This appears in an issue of *Westinghouse Engineer*.)

Four seemingly unrelated things—a tornado, a large tract of land in western Texas, railroads and an electronic tube—have played successively important roles in Lloyd J. Hibbard's life. And, though dissimilar in nature, all these factors form a closely woven pattern of events.

The tornado, which whirled destructively through Hibbard's home town of Snyder, Oklahoma, in 1905, deprived him of his parents. Thus at the age of 12, Hibbard was placed in the care of a guardian, a successful local businessman.

The guardian had acquired, some years previous, several thousand acres of semi-wilderness in western Texas. Being a man of imagination he often spoke to young Hibbard of building a private railroad across the tract. To a lad in his teens, this was a fascinating thought; it aroused Hibbard's interest.

Here the tornado re-enters the picture, although in a less important role, for it had destroyed the local highschool, necessitating many round trips by train to prep school on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. This gave Hibbard a chance to examine railroads more carefully, which evolved into a desire to know more about them. So logically enough, when his highschool training was over, Hibbard enrolled in the University for engineering training.

After graduating Hibbard went to work for Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Here he became one of a group familiarly, though not disparagingly, called "Laminations"—a group of young men who had been chosen for further engineering training.

Here Hibbard heard for the first time of a uni-

que experiment then being conducted with a multiple-unit railway car. This car was powered by d-c motors, supplied by an a-c trolley through mercury-arc rectifiers. Although it aroused little more than his passing interest at the time, twenty or more years later, this idea was to become one of his most engaging and profitable activities.

One of Hibbard's proudest moments came when he and another employe were awarded one of the basic patents on a motor-generator locomotive. Hibbard followed through on this idea by taking charge of the design and manufacture—and later the assembly and testing—of the first m-g locomotive. One of the highlights of this assignment was the personal contact with the late Henry Ford, for whose railroad the locomotive was built. Ford had a keen interest in this development and often wandered down in the shop where it was being assembled to observe, and ask questions about its progress.

During this first half of his career Hibbard formed some pretty definite personal opinions as to the best form of railroad motive power. To him, electric locomotives were the ultimate in traction units. Also, he joined the group favoring a-c transmission with d-c motive power. The m-g locomotive, in which development he had played a major part, was a partial solution—but Hibbard was still bothered by the several separate losses involved in this system.

This eventually led Hibbard to thinking of means of eliminating some of these elements. Fortunately his thoughts turned back to the rectifier multiple-unit car that he had observed while still in training school. And here enters the fourth influential factor in Hibbard's career—an electronic tube. For with the development of the ignitron, new life was breathed into the idea of a rectifier traction unit. And Hibbard was largely responsible for the resuscitation. Campaigning with all the vigor of an experienced salesman Hibbard successfully put over his ideas.

The result—after preliminary tests on a multiple-unit car—is that two ignitron freight locomotives are now to be built.

## Surreys with a Fringe

Here's the man who made fringes and surreys famous and vice versa.

He's Lynn Riggs, '23, who wrote the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" from which the musical production "Oklahoma" was derived. "Oklahoma" longest running musical in Broadway history, ran for 2,202 performances or over five years. His play was a success in its own right before being turned into a musical. It was produced by the Theater Guild in New York and was rated one of the best ten plays of 1931.

This dapper playwright with his omnipresent horn-rimmed glasses was born in a farmhouse at Claremore in August of 1899. Lynn's father was a farmer and Claremore at that time was Indian Territory.

He did his farm chores as a boy, helped with the stock, became a cow puncher of some note and went to the Claremore school and did odd jobs to earn pocket money. One such job was singing at the local movie house.

After being graduated from the Claremore

school, he set out to see the world. First he went to Chicago as a cowpuncher and then he went to New York. In New York his first work was to read proof, followed by a succession of jobs as clerk for an express company, extra on the Hollywood lots and as a clerk in Macy's book department.

Then he returned to Oklahoma and began working as a reporter on the *Tulsa Oil and Gas Journal*. During this time he began to seriously read poetry and decided he wanted to write it.

He entered the University in 1920, where he was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. It was while a student that he wrote his first stage piece, a farcial comedy called "Cuckoo." It was produced by the dramatic department.

Riggs taught freshman English at the University in 1922-23, and while there corresponded with John McClure, whose poetry had influenced him, and who, like himself, was a literary protegee of H. L. Mencken, then editor with George Jean Nathan of the *Smart Set*.

After his teaching stint he went back to New York in 1926 hoping to crash Broadway. In the meantime he worked on a chicken ranch, in a glass factory, sang in Chautauqua and in a picture show. His offering to Broadway was a play called "The Domino Parlor," which Lionell Barrymore said was the best play he had read in 20 years. It narrowly missed reaching Broadway.

In 1928 Riggs journeyed to France on a Guggenheim fellowship in drama. It was there that he wrote his famous play "Green Grow the Lilacs." From that day forward Riggs was made. The play was produced in New York with Franchot Tone, June Walker, Helen Westley and 14 honest-to-goodness cowboys.

The musical production "Oklahoma" was given a special Pulitzer prize honor in 1944. The \$500 special award was given to Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, for their musical arrangement of the play.

Other work by Riggs includes several plays, a volume of verse, "The Iron Dish" and several scenarios for Hollywood. Some of his most successful screen scripts have been "The Garden of Allah,"



LYNN RIGGS