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Back in 1960, when Chicago blues drummer Sam Lay purchased an 8 mm Brownie Hawkeye movie camera to document footage of his performances with Howlin' Wolf, little did he know what the coming attractions would be: A gig with Bob Dylan, when he made history and went electric with the Paul Butterfield Band by plugging in at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. Professional and personal ties to blues legends such as Muddy Waters. And industry accolades, including a Chicago Heroes Award from the Recording Academy.

Now, more than 40 years later, Lay's rare home movies of Wolf, Waters, a young Buddy Guy and others can be seen in the critically acclaimed 90-minute DVD "The Howlin' Wolf Story (The Authorized Story of Chester Burnett)." His home footage of Wolf also appeared in "Godfathers and Sons" documentary that was part of Martin Scorsese's "The Blues" series on PBS.

Lay purchased the box camera set for \$40 in a shop at Madison and Kedzie in downtown Chicago that later burned down in the Martin Luther King riots of 1968.

"It was a Christmas present for my wife," Lay, 68, said while sitting in a recliner in his West Side home. "To teach her how to use it, I had to learn to use it myself. So I brought it to our shows. I used it at Chicago clubs, and I took it on the road."

Lay's footage revisits blues clubs such as Sylvio's on the northwest corner of Lake and Kedzie and the club Key Largo on the southeast corner of Roosevelt and Damen. Both clubs since have been torn down.

"If I was onstage playing, I'd show somebody in the audience how to work the camera," Lay said. "The stuff in the Wolf documentary isn't even the beginning of all the things I shot. I have hours and hours of it."

Born in Birmingham, Ala., Lay developed his trademark double-shuffle on drums from hearing double handclaps at the Church of God and Christ in his hometown.

"The way I play, I could guide people like Lightnin' Hopkins and John Lee Hooker," Lay explained. "My style was more to fit them. For some unexplained reason, I can hear it coming before they get there. People can follow me."

Over the years, his innate sense of rhythm has guided many groups, including local stalwart ensemble the Siegel-Schwall Band. Lay also played drums for Waters' classic "Fathers and Sons" album. He also was the original drummer for the James Cotton Blues Band.

Between 1960 and 1965, his years with Wolf, Lay used the Brownie. He has

bought other cameras since then, several at the old Maxwell Street flea market.

But he did not bring his camera to the Newport Folk Festival in the summer of 1965 when Dylan went electric.

"We left Chicago on the New York Central," Lay recalled. "We got off in Hartford, Conn. We rented a station wagon. I had to do all the driving because I was the oldest. I really didn't know who Dylan was, but we heard 'Like a Rolling Stone' wherever we went. It is still the greatest song I have ever heard. Guitarist Mike Bloomfield was with us. He was so proud to be on that song.

"I joked a lot with Dylan. I made fun of his hair. I told him it reminded me of the Muddy Waters song 'I Found a Bird Nest on the Ground.' Dylan didn't get mad. I would have gotten upset and broke bottles."

A few years ago, Lay sent Dylan a striped shirt and red tie for Christmas. And when Lay received a 2001 Chicago Heroes Award by the Recording Academy (formerly known as NARAS, the group behind the Grammy Awards), Dylan fired off a telegram to Lay, which read, in part:

"You're second to none -- your flawless musicianship and unsurpassed timing, you're a maestro with the sticks and brushes. Your hats, coats, shirts and your walking shoes. That's no small thing, either. (Thanks, by the way for the striped shirt and red tie. When I play drums, I wear that stuff, and people are surprised and impressed that my drumming improves.) Congratulations again, Sam, and thanks for backing me up on what many say is the best album I've ever made."

That album was "Highway 61 Revisited" (1965), where Lay played with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Lay's favorite song is the blistering title track. "I like the uptempo stuff," Lay said. "I had a toy whistle on my car key ring. I blew it, and it sounded like a siren. Bob said, 'Do that again.' So I did it again." And Lay's whistle became the piercing introduction to the song.

A year earlier, Butterfield had discovered Lay at the Blue Flame, 39th and Oakwood (which used to be next to the El Rukn headquarters) when Lay was sitting in with Little Smokey Smothers. Lay had moved to Chicago in 1959 from Alabama to play with harmonica great Little Walter.

Lay's brother was the late James Lay, a civil defense officer in Birmingham and a key witness in the 2001 trial of former Ku Klux Klan member Thomas Blanton for the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, which left four young girls dead and injured another 22 adults and children. Blanton was convicted of four counts of murder. In 1963, James Lay identified Blanton's photo as one of two men he saw in the pre-dawn darkness two weeks before the bombing while he was casing the location.

"That church was only two blocks from our house," Lay said. "They beat my brother

up because he saw there were city police cars in the alley the night before it happened. He had a weapon on him. They took it, unloaded it and whupped him. I won't go into it. I wasn't there. At the time I was touring with the Wolf."

Lay looks ahead. A folded American flag rests in a case above the fireplace of the home he shares with Elizabeth, his wife of 47 years. The flag covered his brother's casket. A former Army paratrooper, James died of complications from a stroke in June 2001 just months after his testimony.

At this point, Lay leans over, grabs his black Gibson guitar and begins to sing country songs such as Charley Pride's "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'" and Merle Haggard's "Old Man from the Mountain." He learned Delta-style guitar to accompany his high lonesome vocals to songs by Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and even "Movin' on Up" (the theme from "The Jeffersons").

The music soothes his soul. "Everything to be done on drums, I've done it," he said. "There's nowhere else to go."

But Lay is teaching drums to Gabriel Butterfield, the son of Paul Butterfield, who resides in Key West, Fla. And last year Lay recorded with Stephen Stills, Chicago harmonica player Billy Branch and vocalist Jim Irsay, the owner of the Indianapolis Colts.

Lay also continues his relationship with Siegel. "I've been with Corky more than 35 years," he said. "Corky is my backbone."

Siegel met Lay in 1969 when Lay was still with Butterfield. "Sam never slows up," Siegel said. "He keeps everyone happy. Sam doesn't play the drums. He sings the drums. It is very melodic and changing. It's not about holding the groove and playing a certain rhythm. It's about going where you need to go."

This has been the way for Sam Lay, always a picture in motion.