



# The Story of My Life

*Earl B. Bliss*



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By  
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*Standing, left to right: mother Rosa E. Bliss, Ethel M. Bliss, Norman R. Bliss and Emma E. Bliss. Seated, Earl B. Bliss.*



## **The Story of My Life**

I have been asked to write my life's story, not only by members of my family, but also by others outside of my family. So now at the age of nearly 81 years I have decided to try my hand at writing to the glory of God.

I was born in Morgantown, WV. My mother's maiden name was Rosa E. Martin. My dad was from Pennsylvania and was from Dutch parents. They called them Pennsylvania Dutch. I never knew any of my dad's folks as when I was 2 years old they packed up and went to Williston, ND to homestead 160 acres of government land.

When I was 4 my mother and dad separated and he went to Montana. My mother got a job in the Great Northern Cafe washing dishes so as to support seven children. She had two brothers who went out there also and homesteaded. The one brother helped my mother out many times when we were in need. He was a good Christian man. I always had great respect for him, not only for his kindness to us, but because of his strict Christian life. Now some may wonder why my parents separated since I had a good Christian mother. Well, it is too disgraceful to tell and I was only 4 years old anyway and it was told me when I got older and began to ask questions.

We left the homestead and moved into town (Williston) where four of us went to school and three were not old enough. In that

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winter we all took Scarlet Fever and Measles. Nothing was known about shots or drugs to kill the germs in those days, but the county sent a nurse and a doctor out to our house to try to prevent us from dying. My mother would weep and pray for us all. The youngest was a baby girl and next was a boy 2 years old who had black hair like a little girl with curls. Mom let it grow as she thought he looked so sweet with long hair and curls. The baby girl died first. Her name was Elizabeth. In those days the funeral director took the body, embalmed it, then brought it back to the home and placed it in the front room till time for the funeral. The morning that they brought the baby back in a little white casket, Mom went in the bedroom and got Amos and said, "Do you want to see the baby?" He said, "Yes!" so she picked him up and took him to the front room to see the baby. As he looked down at the dead baby girl he said, "Now I can rock the baby, can't I Mommie?" Mom broke down crying and said, "No honey, the baby is dead," but being only 2 years old he could not understand this. In a few days Amos died. Then in a few days more Gertie died who was 8 years old. The three children died in ten days' time. We had three funerals in ten days. My mother was broken-hearted.

Now I will go back a couple of years to the little four-room house on the prairie. Mother always baked our bread ever since I can remember. It was about an all day job. She would run us all out of the kitchen when she baked as a jar would cause the bread to fall, so we all went into the bedroom. Being but 4 years old, I wanted to be around Mom and see what she was doing. I went to the kitchen and just as I came running into the kitchen, my mother had a pan of loaves in her hand and she stepped on a little trigger on the oven door and the door swung open and hit me on the back of my hand and the skin stuck to the door. I began screaming and the other children came running to see what had happened. Mom was very



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calm and said, “Take him into the bedroom and get down and ask Jesus to make it well.” They took me to the bedroom and instructed me to get down and ask Jesus to make it well. At 4 years old all I could do was cry, but the three older children began to pray and it soon quit hurting and I got up and slipped out of the room and went to the kitchen. Mom said, “Why didn’t you stay in there?” I said, “Jesus made it well.” Mom began to cry and said, “Praise the Lord! Come here and let me see it.” When she looked at it she was amazed as the skin on the back of my hand was stuck to the oven door. She said, “We will put a rag around it so you won’t get dirt in it.” She put a little Vaseline on it and tied a rag around it and I carried that scar till I was in my thirties. Praise God for His great love.

We lived with my grandparents prior to going to ND. My grandmother held me a lot and spoiled me. I loved my grandma. When we went to ND, I had no one to hold me anymore as my sister was a year and nine months younger than I, so I was supposed to be too old for holding, but I was accustomed to my grandma holding me, so I got sick. One Sunday we all went over to my uncle’s house for dinner. While there they noticed that I didn’t want to play with the other children, my cousins being about my age. One of my aunts became alarmed and said, “I think Earl is sick or coming down with something.” Finally, Mrs. Swimley came over. (My cousins’ grandma). She said, “He don’t look sick. Maybe he’s homesick.” She reached down and picked me up on her lap. I heard my cousins call her “Grandma” and she held me like Grandma, but she didn’t look like my grandma. Anyway she talked to me real sweet and held me for some time on her lap. Finally, I got down and began to play with my cousins. Mrs. Swimley asked, “Did his Grandma Martin hold him a lot?” Mom said, “Yes! She spoiled him. I tried to get her not to hold him so much as I couldn’t do that as I had too many little ones, but she wouldn’t pay any attention to me.” Mrs. Swimley said,

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“That is all that is the matter with him. He is homesick for his Grandma,” so she took the place of Grandma and I got over my sickness.

My Uncle Benny wanted a team of horses. The country was new and horses were scarce except for the wild broncos. They told him if he would give the cowboys \$50.00 they would go and get him a pair of wild horses and he could break them and make a good team. He scratched around and raked up \$50.00 and hired a couple of cowboys to get him a team of wild horses. They got on their horses and took off after the wild horses. When they came back they had a couple of nice wild horses. The first thing you do with a wild horse is put him in the barn and begin to feed him real good. It isn't long till they become tame and begin to look to you for their food, as they never got such good food on the prairie. He soon had them so he could ride them, but had to get the cowboys to ride them first and soon they got so he could ride them. My uncle told me that was the best team he ever owned. When they would have to go to town the horses would take off in a run and he couldn't hold them. They would go as hard as they could run. He asked one of the cowboys about this and said, “I think they will break their wind, and I won't have a team.” The cowboy said, “You can't hurt those wild horses. When they get tired they will quit.” He said they would run all the way to town and be white with a lather when they got there. They didn't have any roads and the prairie was rocky and he said he thought that they would tear his wagon up, but they never did. He was the only one that stayed out there. He finally owned 600 acres of wheat ground and made a good living for himself and his family. As progress increased, so did the material things. He finally got a new Nash Ambassador which was a fine car in those days. Then the combines came in and so did big business. Some had five or six large combines and they would come through the country and harvest the

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wheat for \$3.00 an acre. My uncle said that he couldn't combine the wheat that cheap with his own equipment, so he let those fellows harvest his wheat and they would get it in the elevator in about three days and he had around 1,000 acres.

When we lived in Williston we lived not far from a pop factory. My oldest brother and I would go down to the pop factory to watch them bottle the pop. Some of the men would get bottles of pop and give us each one. Mom finally heard about this and wouldn't let us go down there anymore. We lived by an irrigation ditch and sometimes they would open the ditch and let water come in from the Missouri River and flow across the prairie. They would shut off the locks at times and leave ponds in the ditch with nice large fish. My brother who was five years older than I would take me with him and we would go up that ditch hunting for the fish. The water was real muddy and you could not see the fish. My brother would wade barefoot in those ponds, but I was not so bold and I would walk at the top of the bank. Mom finally told us to stay away from the ditch as she was afraid they might turn the water on at any time and he would get drowned. One day while she was working and my oldest sister was supposed to watch us, we sneaked down to the ditch. My brother took off his shoes and hose and climbed down into the ditch and began wading in the muddy water. He finally stirred up a large fish. He could not hold it as one flop and it would be gone. He finally located it and gave it a big throw with both hands and threw it out on dry land. It was a whopper, and he finally got it by the gills and brought it up out of the ditch. We were so thrilled as we knew we were going to have it for supper. We scaled it and got it ready for when Mom came home, but instead of being happy she got all over us. She said, "Didn't I tell you boys to stay away from that irrigation ditch?" My brother who was very large for his age said, "Mom, we wanted some fish for supper and that is the only way we ever have

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any fish.” We were very poor and Mom realized we didn’t get fish like other kids as we didn’t have a dad, so she didn’t say anything more, and we had a good fish supper. In those days everything was primitive and the fish were extra-large. I saw a man one time carrying a large fish down the street with its tail dragging the ground and he had a hog hook in its mouth; its head was over his shoulder. There were no refrigerators in those days. They would saw big blocks of ice from the river and pack them in sawdust in a large building and sell it in the summer, so when someone would get a fish that large, they would divide it with relatives and neighbors so it wouldn’t spoil. Everyone tried to help each other as most were very poor and struggling to live, but God was merciful and took care of us. Mom would read the Bible and we would all get down and pray morning and evening. God watched over us. There was a widow woman who lived not very far from us who had an RCA Victrola, one with the Morning Glory horn and a crank to wind it up. Mom had taken me and my younger sister down to see her one evening just before dark. This lady asked if we wanted to hear some music. We told her we did. We had never heard one before. I was about 5 years old and my sister was one year and nine months younger. As we were sitting there listening to the music, a knock came at the back door and the lady went to answer it. When she opened the door a drunk man came bolting in and she tried to make him leave, but he wouldn’t go out. She finally introduced him to Mom, saying that he had been a friend to her late husband. He came into the front room where we were sitting and stood in front of the phonograph. Finally, he gave it a big kick and kicked the horn right off of it. This made the woman mad and she grabbed him by the coat and took him through the house and out the back door and gave him a shove and locked the door. She came back in and tried to fix it, but

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it was beyond repair. She said, "He will pay me for that," and that was the end of the music for us.

After that the man next door, who worked for the Great Northern Railroad, had bought a new Ford Model T touring car. It seemed everybody in the neighborhood came to look at it. I remember it so well as it was the first I had seen close up. It had a big brass horn with a rubber bulb on the side where the driver sat and we would squeeze that bulb to hear the horn blow. The neighbor didn't seem to mind as he didn't tell us not to do it, but Mom called us back to the house and told us not to bother it as it cost a lot of money. \$400.00 was a lot of money in those days.

While living at the same place there was a small two-room house in the back that the women used for a wash house. The wallpaper was loose and hanging down from the ceiling. The back door had an old rope hanging down which was very fuzzy with age. I tried to get it untied but could not, so I went into the kitchen and sneaked a match. My oldest sister was washing some dishes and didn't notice me. I went out to the wash house and tried to burn that rope off so I could get the back door opened. The flames went up that rope and to the ceiling and caught the wallpaper on fire that was hanging down from the ceiling. I ran as fast as I could into the house and told my sister (who was about 13 years old) that I had caught the building on fire. She ran out to see, but by that time the flames were coming out the windows. She turned and came back screaming. My mother came out to see what was the trouble. She screamed, "The building is on fire." Mom said, "Run to the neighbor and call the fire wagon." When she left, Mom asked how it got on fire. I told her I was trying to burn the rope off so I could open the back door. She took me into the house and gave me a good whipping, then said, "Didn't I tell you never to play with matches?"

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When the fire wagon came running down the street, the horses stopped at a fire hydrant and the men hooked the hose to it and began to pump the water with the old upright boiler. It was so exciting to me, but by the time they had the hoses connected and the boiler running to pump the water, the building was burned to the ground. That was the first time I had seen a fire wagon.

We finally left Williston and went back to WV to my grandparents to live. I enjoyed my grandparents and my grandmother most of all. My grandpa had a large Sugar Maple grove and an evaporator in which he made Maple syrup in the Spring when it would thaw. He had a wooden sled with four barrels fastened to it and they would go through the woods emptying the sap in the barrels and bring them down to the barnyard where the evaporator was. He had piles of wood which were used to boil the syrup. My grandmother made candy from the maple syrup and molded them in little molds of different shapes like stars and hearts and the like. We children were fond of the maple candy but were only allowed one piece as my grandmother said it was too rich for us. My grandpa made sugar water beer and stored it in the corner of the wash house and kept a lock on it. When Grandma would wash we would follow after her and beg some beer. She would give us about half a cup and that was all. We kids liked it as it had a very good flavor, but they kept it for special occasions. My grandpa liked us to pull the gray hairs out of his head and when evening came and supper was over he would get his paper and sit in his big rocking chair and ask us to pull gray hairs out of his head. He had a stool made for us to stand on and when we would get tired he would get us a couple of peppermint lozenges. He kept them in the front room on top of the mantle over the fireplace so none of us could get them; he used them for bribes only.

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There was no work for a woman with four children in that part of WV as it was coal mining country, so Mom knew a man who had moved down to Chase City, VA to farm. She wrote to him and got permission to come down and help them on the farm. This man's name was Chapman and he had several growing girls. They baked biscuits every meal, even for breakfast. We were not used to that and liked Mom's homemade bread better. We didn't like biscuits and gravy for breakfast. We were used to buckwheat cakes and bacon and eggs or ham and oatmeal or fried mush for breakfast. One time Mom said, "Why don't you girls bake light bread and buns and not have to bake every meal?" They told her they didn't know how. Mom said, "It's not hard and I'll show you." So she made some starter and mixed up a batch of bread. She always made eight or ten loaves and with what she had left she would make a pan of buns. They baked the buns first and set them in the window to cool. The colored hired hand came in for dinner with the team and he smelled the fresh bread as he came by the window. He stopped and took one of those buns from the pan. The oldest girl hollered out and said, "Get your dirty black hands out of that bread." He took a bite and said, "Mmmm! Mighty fine." Mom wasn't used to them talking that way to the colored people so she would scold them and tell them that they could not help it because they were black. "You might have been born black. It wasn't your fault that you were born white," she would say. We were glad to get some of Mom's baked bread again.

This man built us a small two-room house in the edge of a pine woods. He sold Mom a cow for \$50.00 and we were glad to get cow's milk again and butter and buttermilk. We just about lived on that cow and Mom's bread. One time my brother and I went back into the woods where there was a small creek. We came to a large water hole. He being five years older than I, took off his clothes and got in that hole. In a little while he got out and said, "There is a large

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turtle in there.” I said, “You better stay out or he will bite you.” He said, “No, I’m going to get him and we will have turtle soup.” I was scared but not him. He felt around in the muddy water and got him by the tail and dragged him out. He was a whopper. I asked, “How are we going to get him home?” He said, “I’ll show you.” He got a stick and began poking him at the throat. It finally bit the stick and wouldn’t let go. We dragged him home. Mom said, “Where did you get such a large turtle?” He said, “In the woods there is a creek and I found him in a big hole. I’m going to kill him and we will have turtle soup.” We dragged him to a stump in the yard and I pulled his head out of the shell and my brother took the axe and cut his head off. His head still hung on to the stick. We had a time butchering it, but we had a lot of meat and Mom made a large pot of turtle soup. Though we were poor, God did help and provide a treat once in a while.

The cow that Mom had bought from the farmer was a good cow and gave a lot of milk. We had no pasture so had to stake her out for grass. That was my brother’s job. One evening he staked her out in some new grass, and not far from where he staked her was a cornfield. It came a rainstorm in the night and softened the ground and the cow pulled up the stake and got in the cornfield. The next morning, she was lying down and bloated terribly. The new green corn had caused gas on her stomach and she died so we lost our cow.

We left Chase City, VA and moved to Elizabeth City, NC. I don’t remember the details, but I remember we were always trying to better ourselves. Mom got a job and we stayed there for a while. I remember the oyster boats that would come in the bay at times filled with oysters. My brother was always a kid that was nervy. He went to one of the ships that had docked and asked the man how much the oysters sold for? He said 20 cents a gallon. We went back



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home and asked Mom for 20 cents to buy a gallon. We got a bucket and went back to the dock. The man measured out a gallon bucket of oysters in the shells and we went back home and cleaned them. Mom made us a large pot of oyster stew, but she would not eat any. We ate a lot of oyster stew while living there. One day I asked Mom why she didn't like oysters. She said, "Well, I'll tell you. Did you ever notice the grains of sand while eating them?" I said, "Yes!" She said, "Do you know what that is?" I said, "It's something they eat." She said, "That is their manure." I said, "It is good anyway." She couldn't turn us against oysters.

We moved from there and went to Durham, NC. Mom got a job and the two older children, a boy and a girl, went to work with her. It left me and my sister alone, but she got a colored Mammy to take care of us. When Saturday came this colored lady was going to clean us up and give us a bath. My sister who was about 6 years old went in the house and she gave her a bath and put clean clothes on her, then she called for me to come in and get my bath. I said, "No, I'll bathe myself." She said, "No you won't, now you get in here." When I wouldn't come she came after me, but I ran. When Mom came home she told her that I wouldn't mind her. Mom said, I never wash them for as soon as they get old enough I try to teach them to be modest and not undress in front of each other and I let them bathe themselves, but I see that they get clean. The old colored Mammy said, "Lawdy, I never heard of the like!" But she finally quit for some reason that I don't remember. Then someone told Mom that the Bull Durham Tobacco Co. would bring bags and tags to your house and the whole family could tag them, then when they got them tagged just call the office and someone would bring another batch and pick up the ones that were tagged. Mom thought this would give us some extra money so we did this for a while. Then we moved to High Point, NC and Mom got a job in a hosiery mill with the oldest

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girl. When we went to school I was 8 years old and in the second grade. They didn't hurry you through school back then like they do now. The main object with going to school was to learn back then. After school we would come by the hosiery mill and turn stockings till time to go home. When the stockings were woven on the machines they were wrong side out, so our job was to turn them right side out. They had several large wooden boxes along the wall about two feet high. They nailed a broom handle onto the side of the boxes. They would polish the handles till they were very slick, then we would untie a dozen of hose and turn the top of the hose over the handle and pull down, this would turn the hose right side out. Now a dozen was a dozen pair. This is what we did every evening after school so as to help make a living. This is what they called child labor. My brother and sister were old enough that they could run a machine. I liked it in High Point and wished Mom would have stayed. One time as we were in the school room the building shook and we heard an explosion. On the way home we had to pass a large laundry. We saw a crowd gathered in front of the building. When we got there we saw the boiler had blown up and killed the fireman who was a colored man. We asked what had happened. They told us that the water got low and the fireman was propped up on a chair outside asleep and when someone came through the boiler room and saw no water in the gauge, they opened the water valve and it blew up. It tore the brick wall down and it fell on the fireman, killing him.

We then left High Point and moved to Kannapolis, NC. While Mom had a neighbor man to pack some boxes, I was watching him nail them together. I guess I got in his way and he gave me a little shove and told me to get back. As I stepped back, I stepped on a board with a nail in it and ran it in the center of my foot. I sat down and began to cry and pulled it out. They got the boxes packed and shipped to Kannapolis by express, but my foot hurt so bad that I

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could hardly walk. Mom kept hollering at me to hurry up or we would be late for the train. My brother (Norman) would try and carry me, but he would get tired and let me down. We got close to the station and an old colored man was outside a shine shop where they shine shoes. I was still crying so he said, "What is the matter with your foot?" I told him I ran a nail in it. He said, "Come in and I will put something on it." I went in and he got a bottle of turpentine and put a rag around my foot and soaked it with turpentine. All the time Mom was trying to get me to hurry. Well! We missed the train and had to go back to a neighbor's and stay all night at the neighbor's house and we slept on the floor. The next morning, we started for the railroad station again and I was still crying and hobbling on that foot. My brother got a broom handle and nailed a slat across it to make me a crutch. I could not walk with it either. My brother would try to carry me awhile but I was too heavy. He finally put me down and said, "You are going to have to walk." They all went on like they were going to leave me. Mom had been praying all the time. I stepped my foot down on the sidewalk and the pain was gone. I threw the homemade crutch on the bank and quit crying and hurried to catch up with them. Mom said, "Praise the Lord. Jesus healed your foot didn't He?" I said, "Yes! It don't hurt anymore." But my brother went back and got the crutch anyway.

We caught the next train and in a little while were in Kannapolis. We found a house to rent and were settled again in a new home. This town was owned by Cannon Mills so there was no problem getting a job.

Before coming to Kannapolis we lived in a small town, but I have forgotten the name of it. Anyway, while living there, a man gave me a billy goat and this goat was trained like a horse. We had a small cart and harness for him and we sure did enjoy that goat, but

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one night someone stole him and the cart. We had him in a little barn behind the house. We never did know who did it. One day Mom got a telegram from WV that her father had died (my grandpa) and she didn't have the money to go back to the funeral. She went to the office where she worked and asked them if they would lend her the money to go to her dad's funeral, and that they could take it out of her wages when she came back. They gave her the money that she needed and she left us four children in NC, but the two oldest children, a boy and a girl, worked in a cotton mill and a neighbor watched after us.

It was in this town that we got our first taste of crab meat. There were a lot of colored people who lived in this town, but they lived on one side of the street and the white people lived on the other. When going to school we kids would walk with the colored children going to and from school, but they went to a different school where all were black and we went to the white school. I remember a family lived across the street from us and the little colored boy had a little wagon. They never came over to our side of the street, but we would go over to their side and play. One time I asked Mom if I could go over and play with this little boy as he had a wagon. She said, "I don't care." So I went over to play with him. I wanted to pull him in the wagon, but he wouldn't get in. He said, "You get in the wagon." So I got in the wagon and he would push me, but he would never let me push him. I wondered about that but said nothing, as I thought his parents told him not to let me push him. But that was the way things were in those days. This was about 1915.

In Kannapolis we rented half of a double which made it handy for Mom. She didn't have to hire a colored Mammy to look after me and my younger sister. The lady in the other half of the house kept

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an eye on us. I don't remember much of anything of interest in Kannapolis.

One time while living in High Point and Mom was working in the High Point Hosiery Mill, there was a man who worked there that used bad language. Mom would reprove him when he came around her and the women about using bad language, and she would tell him what the Bible says about such things. One time when she reproved him, he began to quote the "woe's" of Jesus found in Luke 12:42-47. Mom said, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." He said, "Very good." She said, "If you know these things it makes you more accountable." Then she said, "Why don't we gather at my house tonight and have a prayer meeting?" He agreed and said he would bring some of the men that he worked with in the mill. That night we had supper and got ready for the prayer meeting. (My mother was a good-looking woman and got a lot of passes in the mill, but she knew how to handle herself.) That night several came and filled our front room. Mom got our song books and began to pass them out. Not very many would take a book, claiming they didn't know the songs, but we started singing, all four of us children and Mom. We sang "Just When I Need Him," "Meet Mother In The Skies" and songs like this that were well-known at that time. After a while Mom picked up her Bible and began to read. Then we got down and she prayed. No one else prayed so we got up and sang a song and that was the end of the prayer meeting. This wicked man that she worked with came to her and said, "Mrs. Bliss, I'm sorry for the bad language I have used around you. I'll not do that again." Then he handed her a five-dollar bill and said, "I'm going to tell all the fellows at the mill that I have found a real Christian woman who works there." Five dollars was a lot of money in those days as they only made about \$1.75 a day. If you got good, you might make \$2.00 a day.

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After living at Kannapolis for some time, Mom decided to go back up north and stay with my grandma. We were all excited to get to go back to our old home—my grandparents’ farm. I always liked my grandparents’ place and it was always home to me. When we got up there we found that my grandmother had asked her oldest son (my uncle) to move in with her as she was all alone. My uncle ran a dairy on another farm down the road from my grandparents’ farm. He and his family moved in with my grandma before we came back and was running the dairy on Grandma’s farm.

The next morning after we arrived and had breakfast, my uncle said, “Can you milk a cow?” I said, “No sir.” He said, “Then I am going to teach you to milk.” We went to the barn and he gave me a large milk pail. He said, “Now here is a cow we call ‘Easy’ because she is so easy to milk.” I looked at her and was afraid as she looked very big to me. The milk was running from one teat. I asked if she would kick me. He said, “No, you wouldn’t have a cow that kicked. She will not pay any attention to you as she is busy eating.” I sat down on the stool and he showed me how to hold the teat and squeeze the milk out. In a little while I was using both hands. I was only 9 years old, but in a little while I was milking cows. I got so I could milk fourteen cows at a milking. My uncle had a son a year younger than I was (my cousin) and we enjoyed being together and doing the chores together. This was the happy time of my life. My uncle was a good farmer in those hills. You had to know how to farm in WV and he learned how from his youth.

He raised several crops, even buckwheat for winter pancakes. He always raised several hogs and had plenty of meat and sausage. He had the first silo in that part of the country, and raised a large field of silage corn. We liked filling that silo. My cousin and I would stomp the silage as the cutter would blow it in. We had corn all over

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us, but this was fun to us. Then in the winter months we would feed the silage at every milking with a large scoop of mash. We loved the smell of that silage, but the cows loved it more.

One year my uncle decided to have a cash crop so he planted a large field of watermelons. How they did grow and got so big we could hardly lift them. We would gather a wagonload and take them to a coal mining town not far away and they would sell very good. We always came home with an empty wagon and my uncle had some extra money as he had two families to feed. We all got along good together. I don't remember a time when there were any arguments. Everyone seemed to enjoy each other's company. His family eventually became our family. Finally, there was a four room house empty not far from Grandpa's place and Mom rented it. It belonged to Grandpa's sister who had died and never got married. She lived an old maid all her life. Mom rented this house and it was close to my uncle and we were still like one big family.

We all went to a one-room schoolhouse together which was about a mile away. Reading, writing and arithmetic seemed to be all that was important in those days as most people had large families and needed all the help they could get to make a living. We all kept busy and when Sunday came we went in town over the hills to a Methodist church where my grandfather used to be choir leader.

As there was no work for a woman in that part of the country because it was coal mining country, my mother went to the state board and got a permit for my oldest brother so he could go to work in the mine. He was only 14 years old but big for his age and very strong. He got a job and went to work and took the place of my dad. But he didn't mine coal, he was what they called a trapper. When the motor would come through, he would open the big doors that directed the ventilation into different parts of the mine for the

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workers. He did this on the night shift and Mom got him a mouth harp so he could play it and occupy his leisure time.

One day Mom's uncle came back from a trip down in Florida to visit his only son, Luther. Luther had gone to the university in Morgantown and got a good education, then went to Chicago and left the hills of WV. He got a job with an insurance company and made pretty good at that, so when he heard about the cheap land in Florida, he went down there. He was surprised to find it as he had heard, so he bought up a lot of Florida land. When the boom came he made himself a millionaire then wanted his old dad to come to Florida and stay with him and his wife. Uncle Alva came to see Mom and wanted her to rent his little farm of about 38 acres, but it was all under laid with coal which made it valuable. Mom told him she wasn't able to pay him rent for it, but he insisted he wanted her to take the old home place as he didn't want to leave it empty. It was an old log house with a large fireplace and a big log barn and a coal mine so there was plenty of free fuel to cook with and heat the house in the winter. There was also a large peach orchard on top of the hill and he told Mom the peaches would pay the rent, but that he just wanted her to occupy the place. So Mom took the place and we moved to Uncle Alva's old farm. It was a little farther for my brother to go to work in the Osage Mine, but he was big and strong and didn't seem to mind. I still went down to my uncle's place and milked cows and helped on the farm, as there was not much to do at the old log house. My brother finally found him a girl and he didn't bring much money home anymore, so Mom decided to move to Granville where she might find a little work to support my sister and I as we were the only ones home now. My oldest sister (Emma) had left and gone to live with some folks who had a dairy farm. We all felt this was a bad move and it was. She got to running around and they didn't know where she was most of the time. This grieved Mom



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quite a lot, but there was nothing she could do as Emma was of age. We always had a cow and I would milk the cow and take care of her. One time Mom made a churn of buttermilk. There was a large show-boat that came up the river and docked not far from where we lived. Mom was working and my younger sister and I went down to see the show-boat. A man came out and said, "Would you like to see the boat?" We told him we would, so he took us on the boat and showed us around. When we went to leave he said, "Now bring your friends and come to the show tonight. It's only 10 cents." We told him we didn't have any money. He said, "What have you to sell?" I said, "Nothing," but my sister said, "We have a gallon of buttermilk." He said, "Bring me the buttermilk and I'll give you two tickets for the show tonight." So we got the buttermilk and gave it to him and he gave us two tickets. When Mom came home and we told her what we had done, she just about gave us both a whipping, but she let us go that time and gave us a good scolding and told us the buttermilk was worth more than 20 cents. Then she told us we could not go down to see the show. We tried to talk to her to let us go, but she said, "No, they have a lot of girls on the show that aren't decent, and you are not going to see them." Well, we not only lost the buttermilk but we didn't get to see that show. Mom was very strict about shows, but a circus was a different matter. They had a lot of animals and elephants and we could go see a circus once in a while.

My grandpa was a horse trainer for the circus so I suppose that made some difference. He was very fond of horses and could get a horse to do about anything. He had a fine black riding horse with a white star in his forehead. He had him trained to do a lot of tricks. When he put the saddle on him and wanted to get on he would say, "Kneel Bob," and that horse would kneel down and he would get on him. We kids thought that was something. When he went to feed the horses and he came to Bob he would say, "Bob, do you want some

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corn?” Bob would shake his head “No!” Then he would say, “Do you want some oats?” Bob would shake his head “Yes!”

My mother finally married my step-dad which none of us wanted her to do, but she said she had to do something as she had no support for me and my younger sister. A few months after she married him my grandmother sold the old home place to the coal mines for a large sum of money, then divided it between my mother and her four brothers. My mother often said if Grandma had told her that she was going to sell the place she would never have gotten married, as she didn't have a very good life with him anyway. None of the relatives liked him. He was a German who came from Germany when he was 16. I never would call him “Dad.” They all tried their best to make me call him “Dad,” but I never would. I would call him “the old man” or “him”. I would tell them all that he was not my dad. He was a coal miner and made twenty dollars a day, but when Mom got all that money he quit the mines and didn't work anymore. We finally came to Anderson, IN and they bought a 10-acre farm 6 miles west in a small town named Hamilton. We went to school there for one year. My step-dad would not get a job and work as they only paid \$3.50 a day and he said he wouldn't work for no one for those wages, so they lost the place and we traded our equity for an old two story house in town. But after making this deal they found out there was a sewer coming down through the middle of the street and there was a lot of taxes against the place so they finally sold it and Mom got the balance of her money from the sale of the home place as it was paid in two installments. When she got the rest of her money they bought another place in Hamilton and my step-dad started in the chicken business, but he would not work for low wages so they finally sold it and we went back to WV. They began looking for a farm and found one up in PA. It was a nice 50-acre farm with a gas well on it and a large barn with a six-room

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house and two hen houses. We had 300 White Leghorns so we started in the poultry business. My step-dad took care of the chickens and I did the milking and taking care of the farm and horses.

In the Spring I did the plowing and planting of the crops. It was very hilly so we had what was called a hillside plow. When you got to the end of the furrow you kicked a lever with your foot and gave the plow a flip and turned it over and came back in the same furrow, that way you kept turning the ground down the hill. We raised corn, oats and wheat. We had a wonderful meadow and had all the hay we could use. We had the grain threshed and put in bins in the barn. These bins were lined with tin so the mice and rats could not get in. We used a lot of grain for chicken feed and some for the cows and horses. I really liked that farm, but my step-dad finally began drinking and gambling so spent his time downtown while I was out doing the farm work. But I liked to do the farm work and loved the cows and calves. My step-dad bought me a nice black mare at a sale for \$20.00. Her name was Fannie and she was a nice mare. One time in the night she got out of the box stall and got in behind the other horses and got kicked in the flank of her left leg. I went to feed and water them the next morning and when I led her to water she would stick her nose in the water trough up to her eyes, but couldn't seem to swallow. It was then that I noticed the big gash in her leg. She couldn't eat either, so we called for the vet. He came out and said she had Lock-jaw and he could do nothing for her. He said, "You might as well shoot her as she will die." I felt so sad for her, so we took her up on the hill in the woods and while I held her my step-dad shot her with the shotgun.

He gave me a bull calf one time and said I could have him, but I could not have anything but skim milk for him. We separated all

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the milk, so I told Mom I couldn't raise that calf on skim milk. She said, "Sure you can. Next time you go to the feed mill get a bag of Blachford's calf meal and put a little of that in the milk and it will do just fine." I took her advice and the calf grew to be a big husky fellow. I even had him so I could ride him like a pony. But one day a cattle buyer came along and asked, "Have you any cattle you want to sell?" At first my step-dad told him no. Then he said, "I have a bull calf I will sell. What will you give me?" They went and looked at him and I ran to the house. I told Mom he was going to sell my calf to a cattle buyer. She said, "Oh. I reckon not." I said, "Yes he is, now go out there and stop him," but before she got out to the barn they were loading him in the truck. Oh, I was so hurt as I thought as much of him as I did my dog. Mom scolded him but he said, "What good is he? Just eats a lot of feed for nothing." I never did care for him, but this turned me against him more than ever. Then one time I had a beautiful bird dog that my brother gave to me when but a pup. He was so pretty and smart. I had trained him to go get the cows for me when they were up on the hill in the pasture. He would go bring them to the barn. He saved me many a step. In the fall we had a cornfield out beside the house. He turned the cattle in this cornfield to eat the shocks. We had a good-sized calf who my dog liked to play with. He would bark at it and the calf would chase him. My step-dad was sitting at the kitchen window. He got up and called, "Come here, Prince!" The dog came running to the house, but when he saw the old man come back in the house he turned around and went back to the field after the calf. The old man got up and got his gun. He said, "I'll teach him to mind." He went out on the porch and said, "Come here, Prince!" Prince came running to him. When he got so close, he shot him in the head and killed him. I was 17 and was going to leave the farm and hike down to my brother in WV, but Mom talked me out of it. But God was looking down and seeing

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all this. After three years he finally got to gambling and spent his time downtown and left the work for me, except the chickens. I had been saving my money little by little to buy a Ford car. One day I was plowing strawberries with a boy who lived not far away. My step-dad came from town and said, "Put the horse in the barn and come with me and you can buy a car, as they are having a big sale downtown." I put the horse in the barn and told the boy he could go home. When we got downtown and were looking at the cars, I found a Ford that had belonged to a young man who went to Sunday school where we did and I had ridden in that car many times. I told my step-dad that there was Bus Green's Ford. He traded it for a Maxwell Touring. A salesman came up and the old man asked, "What are you asking for this car?" He said, "They are to be sold at auction at two o'clock and they have been advertised." My step-dad said, "Let's go back to the farm as we got work to do." (I think he did these things to make me mad.) I was 17 and I didn't listen to him this time. The old man said, "Come on and let those guys alone. They don't want to sell cars." But I went into the office. The owner was sitting at a desk. The salesman began telling about the car and he said, "Is that your dad?" I said, "No! He is my step-dad." I told him I knew Bus Green and knew that Ford and would like to have it. He said, "Well, you bring me \$75.00 and you can have it." I said, "I'll be back." I went out and got in the car, but said nothing to my step-dad. When we got home I got my bank book and I lacked \$12.00 having enough to buy that Ford. I told Mom all about it and she gave me the \$12.00. She called my step-dad in the house and said, "Why do you want to pull dirty tricks like that on him? Now take him back to town and let him buy that Ford." He did, but we didn't talk till we got to town. He asked me if I had enough money. I told him I did. I got the money out of the bank and went to the Chrysler dealer and laid the money down on this man's desk. I was so happy. The man acted like he was

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too. He said, "I'll give you a dealer's plate and you can bring it back the next time you come to town." I drove that car home and drove it for two years after that, and we drove it to Indiana.

Now here is how it came about that we left PA and came to IN the second time. Mom had smelled liquor on the old man's breath so she began snooping around in the feed bin where we mixed the chicken feed. She finally found a 5th of whiskey in the feed bin so she took it out and broke it in pieces over a large rock. She questioned him about it and what he was doing spending so much time downtown. This made him mad and they had a few words. She told him she wasn't living with a man that drank. She thought it straightened him out, but it didn't.

Then one day a man who owned a feed mill came to the farm and wanted to see Mr. Smith. Mom told him he was uptown somewhere. He said, "You tell him that if he don't pay me for that feed bill, I'm going to bring the sheriff out here and sell his livestock. He has run up a feed bill with me then went down to the other mill to buy his feed." Mom said, "I didn't know anything about that, but I will see that you get your money." Of course when the old man came home there was another quarrel. She said, "I see you are up to your old tricks and can't be trusted." She also found out that he hadn't made payments on the farm for a couple of months. He had cut down a lot of oak trees and made mine posts and sold them to the mines for \$2,000.00 and didn't pay it in the farm. They only paid \$4,500.00 for the farm so this money would have put us in good shape with the owner, but Mom didn't know what he did with the money as she supposed he was paying it on the farm. So this was the end of the rope for her and she told him she was going to sell the farm as he couldn't be trusted. She put it in the hands of a farm agency and sold it quick so as to get out of debt. Then she told him

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we were going back to IN. He said, "I'm not going back to that God-forsaken place." She said, "Stay here then, but I am going." He said, "You are not taking my boy." She said, "Where I go, he goes." He had a 2-year-old boy by my mother whom he was very fond of. We packed up the Ford and left for Indiana and he rented a house and got a job in the coal mine.

We arrived in Anderson on July the 4th at eleven o'clock and went to my Uncle George's place. My Ford came through in flying colors. It was a 1923 Model T Touring. By now I was past 18 years old and felt I must get a job and help out my mother. I went to Delco Remy and walked in. I knew nothing about getting a job. I sat down and watched for a while. I saw a man come out once in a while and call out a few names. I asked the man sitting beside me how you went about getting a job. He said, "You gotta have a pull." I asked, "What is that?" He said, "You must have some relatives that work here or know a foreman." I knew no one, so decided if I got a job I would have to force my way in. So the next time that man came out to call some names out, I got up and went in behind the last man. They lined up along the wall and I did likewise. When this man sat down at his desk he looked up at me and said, "Did you see that sign on the door?" I said, "Yes, Sir! The sign said 'Private'." I thought, "If I go back out now, I never will get back in." So I just stood there. After hiring all those that he called in the office, he said, "Come here and sit down." He took a sheet of paper and began asking me a lot of questions. I answered them the best I could. Then he wrote me out a pink slip and told me to take it to a man by the name of Mr. Newby, out in a new building. I walked right by the man that gave me the line and went out to the new building. Mr. Newby gave me a pick and shovel. It was in August and the sun was hot, but I didn't mind as I was so happy to get a job to help my mother. When I went home that night, everyone said, "Where have you been?" I said,

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“Working at Remy.” They couldn’t believe me. Back then we worked 9 hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday at 40 cents an hour. But in three days this foreman came to me and said, “Earl, get your pick and shovel and come here.” I did, and he said, “How would you like to work in the boiler room?” I told him that I didn’t think I would like it as I was afraid they might blow up. He laughed at me, then said, “You never heard of one blowing up.” I said, “I saw one that blew up and it killed the fireman.” He said, “Someone must have done something wrong.” I told him that the fireman was asleep on a chair outside and someone came in the boiler room and saw the water was out of the tube, so they turned on the water valve and it blew up. He said, “It will do it every time.” Then he said, “They want a young man over there that is not afraid to work. I’ll give you 50 cents an hour if you will go over there.” I said, “I’ll take it,” so we went to the boiler room. What he didn’t tell me was that they worked 12 hours a day in the boiler room, but I made \$6.00 a day and felt I was getting rich. Everyone seemed to be proud of me. My Uncle George said, “I don’t know how you did it as I have put in applications there several times and couldn’t get a job.” At the time I didn’t realize it, but later on I realized God was with me. I worked in the boiler room every day for one year, including Sundays and holidays. I finally got another job inside where I only worked 8 hours and made the same money.

My step-dad finally came back from PA. My mother had bought 2 acres of river bottom land, and he built a shack on this. In 1941 it caught fire and they had to build a new one, a small four room house. I was in Detroit working at Chevrolet Gear & Axle at that time, so helped them with what I could. Then in 1941 on December 7th the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor and that was the last night I worked. All manufacturing ceased at once, and they all changed over to military. I came home and never went back. My step-dad was a painting



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contractor so I went to work for him. I had bought a Pontiac while working at Chevrolet so we took a trip to WV that summer. In the Fall I went down again and spent 3 months with my oldest brother and family. I came back to IN and got a job at Guide Lamp, a division of GM. I worked till April then went into the Army. I had met a young girl that winter who took a liking to me and I to her, but never thought of getting married because of the war. She became interested in getting married, but I told her I wouldn't marry anyone and go into the Army. When I got in the Army she began writing to me and became more serious on getting married so she wrote me that if I didn't send her the money to come down she would hitchhike it there. I felt she would do it so I sent her the money and she came on a train to Lawton, OK where we were married August 1, 1943. I was in the Mule Pack for a while, then got my knee injured and I was put in limited service. Then I went 4 months to mechanic's school. In October they gave me a discharge and we came home. We were both very happy and Mom gave us the little four-room house to live in and I paid \$25.00 a month rent. I went back to my job right away. On February 1, 1945, we had a little girl which we thought was divine. She was very sweet and I thought there was nothing like her. Today she is a grandmother and three of her children are married and one girl is at home yet who is 13 as of 1988.

While we lived in the four room house my step-dad died and left my mom all alone. My half-brother moved in with her and she didn't like that, so she didn't know what else to do but to sell the property and divide the money. This she did, then bought a lot and put a trailer on it. I told her I did not think she would get along through the winter as she couldn't control the heat, so she finally sold it and came to live with us.

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When our daughter (Sherry) was 2 years old, my wife began to hemorrhage. I had quit the factory and gone back to painting. I was painting a house for an old widow woman when she happened to ask me how my wife and baby were. I told her the baby was fine but my wife was not doing so good, and explained the situation. She was an elderly woman, so she said, "Mr. Bliss, this is serious." I said, "She is going to the doctor, but they don't seem to be doing her any good." She said, "You take her to Dr. Long, as he is a woman's doctor." I went home and told her and she made the appointment. I took her up right away. After the examination the Dr. called me in and said she must have an operation right away. I told him it was up to her and I didn't want to say either way. So he made an appointment with a surgeon whom she knew and they put her in the hospital. My wife's oldest sister took care of Sherry as she had no children and was fond of Sherry. The next morning, I went up about eight o'clock in the morning and they had her doped up so that she didn't know me, nor could she talk to me. I felt terrible. So I went on to work and about noon I went up to see her, but she was still out like a light. About every 3 or 4 hours I would quit work and go up to see her. At night I would go see Sherry and stay till Rosemary put her to bed or she would cry when I would leave. I did this for 4 days. The fourth night when I went to see my wife she was dying and almost dead. If I hadn't gone up there they would have let her die, as the nurse was sitting down the hall reading a movie magazine. I went into the room and felt my wife. She had no life and one little warm spot between her breasts. She was cold all over. I went out to see the nurse and I said, "Here you sit reading and my wife is almost dead." She said, "Mr. Bliss. I am not authorized to do anything without the doctor's orders." I said, "That doctor is home in bed and don't know what is going on up here. Now you get him up here right away." She went to the phone and called the doctor. When she came back she began

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to fix a hypo, then said, “Mr. Bliss, there is nothing you can do here, so you go home, you’re all excited.” I didn’t move. Then she said, “If you don’t, I’ll call the police and they will escort you out of here. I then left and went home, but as I was going down on the elevator, I began to cry and could hardly see to drive home. As soon as I got into the house, I went to our bedroom and got down beside the bed and began to pray. I was always taught to pray when I needed help, and I sure needed help now. I prayed for quite some time asking God to spare her life as I did not know how to raise a little girl all alone and she needed her mother. Finally, I said all I knew to say and had cried till I didn’t have any more tears, then I went to bed. The next morning, I jumped up and the first thing I thought of was her being dead. I jumped in the car and went to the hospital thinking all the time that she was surely dead. Then I would think, “Why didn’t they call me?” I thought, “They wouldn’t call me because of the scene I made the night before.” But as I was going down the hall and getting close to her room, I heard voices in her room. I peeped in and there she was, sitting up with two pillows behind her back. I never saw her look so nice. Her hair was combed beautifully, so I walked up to her bedside trying to keep back the tears. She said, “Daddy, why haven’t you been up to see me?” I could not say a word but broke down crying and stood there holding her hand. The lady across the room said, “I felt so sorry for your husband. He would come up here every 3 or 4 hours trying to awaken you. He would speak to you and pat you on the face and do everything to try to awaken you, but he couldn’t wake you up.”

Finally, she said, “I want you to go to J. C. Penney and get me a cheap robe and a pair of house slippers as they are going to get me up and walk me down the hall. I said, “They are going to do no such thing.” She said, “They have to so I won’t get adhesions.” I didn’t know what she was talking about, but I did as I was told and got her

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a nice robe and a pretty pair of slippers. When I came back she opened them and said, “Why did you buy such nice things? I won’t need them when I get home.” But I was so glad that she was alive that I would have bought her anything that I was able. I said, “Did the nurse tell you about last night?” She said, “She told me they about lost me.” I said, “If I hadn’t come up here when I did they would have let you die.” I knew it was only God’s mercy that she was alive. But then it seemed the devil took over her body and soul. We could not get her to go either to camp meeting or church. Finally, she got to running around with another man at night, as we both were working nights. She finally got our daughter to get married and leave home and then left herself, got a divorce and finally married another man. I am still living all alone as I have committed everything to Jesus and I am in His hands. I had done a lot of praying, especially for her, as I knew the devil was surely going to take her to hell if God didn’t do something for her. Then I remembered that God made us free moral agents and gave us a free will to choose our own way. God doesn’t make anyone serve Him, but He gives each one a choice whom we will serve. If folks only knew how bad hell is and the awful suffering connected with hell, and the awful flames of fire which burneth forever without end, they would do all within their power to escape such a place. But the devil has them blinded so they can’t see how bad it really is, that way he deceives them into thinking it can’t be too bad. But I want to say right here, if all the people that are in hell could get out, you would see one of the greatest meetings you ever saw.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to

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pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Luke 16:19-26.

Before I finish I would like to tell one more incident that happened in my life. I was raised by a good godly mother, and we had family worship morning and evening all my life. I was taught when in trouble to pray and ask God to help me. I did this many times, although not with much faith, but God looketh on the heart and helped me many times, unworthy as I was. When I went into the Army, I did not fear what would happen to me, or if I would come back. I felt that God had always taken care of me and He would continue to do so. When we were in training, there was a little Jew fellow from New York in our outfit and he was continually talking about splitting the atom. The fellows all made fun of him, but he only said they were showing their ignorance. Many times he would say things that would have us all laughing. No one called him by his right name, but everyone called him "Abie." One morning they called everyone to the theatre to see some military pictures. We all went expecting to see the same old garbage, but to our surprise it was an Air Force picture of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It showed those big bombers in formation going with a dummy load at first. Every morning they would make a run. Finally,

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as they were loading the bombs under those bombers, the Air Force narrator said, “Now none of these pilots know who has the loaded bomb. It is kept secret from them.” To each of them it was just routine. But this time when the commander said, “Open the hatch,” the bottom of the plane opened and the bombs began to fall. All were dummies but one, then he said, “Head for home.” They all banked and turned around and headed back. When that bomb hit the city it looked like rubbish flying in the air, buildings flattened to the ground and nothing was left—just desolation. The fellows put their arms around that Jew and said, “Abie, we are sorry. You are smart and knew what you were talking about.” He was very quiet and said nothing. He had gone to college and knew what they had taught him, but the other fellows didn’t. I couldn’t get that off my mind, so I wrote my mother a letter and said, “Mom, pray for me that God will get me out of here. They are training us to kill, and I don’t want that on my mind for the rest of my life.” She wrote back and said, “I have been praying for you. Now you get busy and pray for yourself.” I felt that was a little hardhearted, but it struck home. I began to pray every night after the fellows would go to bed. I would kneel beside my bed and pray. I played a guitar, so one night when we came in, my name was on the bulletin “Come to the Orderly Room dressed in Sun Tans.” I couldn’t imagine what kind of duty I could do in Sun Tans. Finally, we asked the sergeant what this was all about. He said, “It has something to do with your music. Report to the Regimental Headquarters and report to Lieutenant Ludwig.” We all did as we were told. There must have been about 200 fellows that were musicians. They started trying everyone out. My buddy played a sax and clarinet. I kept telling him that I didn’t want to play in that orchestra. When they came to the guitar players they kept calling them up to the platform and letting them try out with the band. None could play with a band. He missed me altogether. Then he said,

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“Wait a minute. Where is Bliss?” I said, “Here.” He said, “Stand up so I can see you.” I stood up and he said, “Do you play a guitar?” I said, “Yes, Sir.” He said, “Take the stand. I don’t know how I missed you.” I took the stand and there was a most beautiful Gibson electric guitar. I strummed a few cords and the leader put some music in the rack. I said, “I don’t read music. I just learned the chord system.” He said, “The same thing,” and pointed to the music. There were the chords. I felt relieved. This fellow liked guitar and we played several numbers. I don’t know whose guitar that was, but it was a good one. So I was chosen for the orchestra out of 13 guitar players.

In a few days we went on a hike for 4 days. I was told to send for my guitar, which I did. It was a blonde maple electric. When it came we rounded up some musicians and began to have a little band of our own. It didn’t take long for us to become well-known around the barracks. At the time of the hike, I was in the Mule Pack. Coming back about eleven o’clock at night I stepped off in a hole and injured my left knee. The next morning, they sent me to the hospital and found I had broken the gristle in my knee joint. This put me in limited service. I was then sent to mechanic’s school and never got to play in that orchestra. I hobbled around for several months, then they put me up for a discharge. I didn’t tell my wife as I was afraid something might happen and it would be a big disappointment to her. The time came for me to be discharged so I was paid, and packed my gear and left the Army. I got the bus and went down to where my wife was staying. I knocked and she came to the door. I said, “Pack your things as we are going home.” She looked at me and said, “If you think I am going AWOL with you, you are crazy.” I said, “How would I get past the gate with all this GI equipment, if I were going AWOL?” Then I pulled out my papers and showed them to her. She was very happy and began to pack. We caught the bus and then a train to Oklahoma City. We then took another train,

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but it had a broken piston and just hobbled along. It took us two days and a half to get home. I got home with \$6.00 in my pocket. . . .

### **An Interval of 7 Years**

I went back to painting as my step-dad had died and many were calling and wanting me to do their painting. I told my wife to take the calls in rotation and I would get to them as soon as possible. I was getting a lot of work. Finally, I got a call for a nursing home and this lady was in a hurry, so I decided to let the other work go and do the nursing home first. I worked 3 days and was making good money when the lady wanted me to help her husband move a huge refrigerator in the kitchen. As we were lifting on it, I strained my back and could not hold my urine, so had to quit. I was laid up for a year and went to the VA Hospital in Indianapolis, but they couldn't do me any good, so after 16 days, I came home like I went.

My wife went to work for \$24.00 dollars a night, as she worked till midnight. I felt so bad, but there was nothing I could do about it. I had thought of my promise to God and had run around to a lot of meetings, but never found a place I thought I could get saved as I would find fault with all of them. One evening a minister and his wife came to my door to get a pail of water, as they were staying in a trailer on Mom's property. His name was Bro. Cecil Carver. I told them to have a seat as I was lying on the davenport—the only place I could get any rest. He said, "I hear you have been spending your time in the hospital." I said, "I have been in the VA Hospital at Indianapolis for 16 days, but they said there was nothing they could do for me." He said, "Don't you believe God could heal you?" I said, "Yes, but I don't know if He would or not." He said, "What makes you think He wouldn't?" I said, "God healed me many times when I was growing up and Mom never had a doctor for any of us." He



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said, "Is God any different now than He was then?" I said, "No, but I am not innocent like I was then, either." He said, "You hit the nail on the head. That is the only difference between you and God." We talked for a while, then he said, "We will pray for you tonight," and picked up the pail of water and left. I got up and went to bed. I slept so soundly that I didn't hear my wife come in from work. The next morning, I woke up and dressed and went down in the basement to fire the coal furnace. I shook the ashes and threw in some coal, then came running up the steps and into the kitchen. When I shut the kitchen door it shocked me. I realized I hadn't done that in a year. I knew God had heard their prayers and healed me. I thought, "Those people must be living close to God that they would pray for me once and God would heal me." I went to the kitchen cabinet where I kept all my pills and threw all of them in the garbage, then I walked 10 blocks to town to tell the doctor that I wanted to cancel my appointments. He was Catholic and I didn't know what I was going to say, but naturally I wanted to get off as easy as possible, but sometimes God has different plans. I asked his nurse if I could see the doctor. She was a little smart and said, "Is it important?" I said, "It is to me," so she asked him if he would see me and I heard him say, "Send him in." When I got in his office I said, "Dr. Lamey, I came up to tell you I want to cancel my appointments. I got up this morning and didn't have a pain so I walked 10 blocks to town to tell you, and I threw away all those pills." He said, "Earl, I'll get you some more, as they are just now taking effect." I said, "I took those pills for a year and they haven't done me a bit of good." He began to fill the bottles and something said to me, "You better tell him what happened or it might come back on you." I thought, "Oh, my! I don't know what to say," but I opened my mouth and the words began to pour out. I said, "Dr. Lamey, I don't want those pills because a minister came to my house last night and had a talk with

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me and before he left he said he and his wife would pray for me. I got up this morning and went to the basement and fired the coal furnace and came running back up the stairs before realizing that I didn't have a pain. Then I went to the cabinet where I kept those pills and threw them all in the garbage pail, then I walked 10 blocks to town and I haven't got a pain in my kidney." He poured the pills back in the jars and sat there awhile saying not a word. Then he got up and said, "Earl, I believe that. I believe when we have done all we know to do, there is a Higher Power that steps in and takes over." He put his arm around me and opened the side door and said, "Now you hold on to that." I have taken his advice and held on to it till this day. Praise our God!

I began to go to meeting and in a few nights I got saved. My daughter was about 5 years old and was sitting with my brother's children. When I got saved I came back to where they were and they were all crying, When I sat down beside her, I said, "What is the matter?" She said, "I didn't want you to go up there." It sounded so pitiful that I had to laugh. The next morning when she got up she went to her mother who was still in bed and said, "Mommie, Daddy got saved last night." She came in the room and said, "Did you?" I said, "Yes, I did." She said, "That did it. I'm leaving." I asked, "What for?" She said, "I'm not staying here." I asked her where she was going. She said, "If I wanted you to know I would have told you." So I committed it in the hands of God, but I didn't believe she would leave. But when we came from church there was a note on the radio and she was gone. I prayed for 3 days and every night she would call me about two o'clock in the morning and wake me up. I slept like a child. The third night she called, she was crying and she said, "What were you doing?" I said, "I was sleeping. What would you think I would be doing at two in the morning? Why do you keep waking me up in the morning?" She said, "How can you sleep?" I

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said, “I sleep like a baby.” She said, “I haven’t slept a wink since I left. Are you praying for me?” I told her I was. Then she asked, “Can I come home?” I said, “I didn’t run you off. Do you want me to come and get you?” She said, “No, I’ll get Betty and her husband to come and bring me home.” I was so glad to have her again and besides, Sherry grieved for her a lot. She would get on my lap and go to sleep. I knew she missed her mother. In the afternoon of the next day she came back home. We lived together for 20 years, but the devil finally deceived her and got her snared in adultery.

Friends, that is the devil’s job and purpose, to get folks into hell. He knows if he can get them snared in adultery, there is not much hope for them ever going to heaven. The wisest man that ever lived (Solomon) said, “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.” Proverbs 6:32. “. . . Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” I Corinthians 7:10, 11. This is what the Word of God says, for true and righteous are His judgments and no one can escape. We hear a lot of debate on whether the AIDS disease is a judgment from God. Here is what the Bible says: “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” I Corinthians 6:18. Listen again to what God says: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, . . .” I Corinthians 6:9. This is why all the trouble is in the world today. Folks are going mad about sex, and God hates this and destroyed this world once for this and also Sodom and Gomorrah for the same things that they are doing today.









