

## Introduction

This is not a story of someone who gained fame and fortune. But of average people, the ups and downs in their lives, they're love of God, and family and their will to survive. I find it hard to believe that anyone had it tougher, but, at the same time, I guess there were many people with the same hardships.



Hard Times Good Times

Written by

Alvin Ray Kessinger



# Hard Times Good Times

## Chapter One

It was a hot, midsummer day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1942. Estill Kessinger, or “Kay singer” as he was called in Butler County Kentucky, was standing at the edge of his yard, looking out over his farm. Lindbergh, his youngest son was at his side. Lindbergh had caught a horsefly, and was letting it fly around at the end of a piece of thread. He watched him for a while, and then looked out over the rows of beans he had planted, He thought, “I sure hope we have a good crop this year; we could use the money with the new baby coming at any time.” His wife Pearl was in the house.

A one room shake He had built when they moved there.

He had started another room with logs .

I hope to finish that room before winter.

Pearl was about ready to have their sixth baby. It was always the same; he would be a nervous wreck until the baby came.

Estill was a tall, rugged, good-looking man, forty-four years old. He had black hair with some gray. His face was beginning to show proof of many years of hard work. He had deep blue eyes that were kind and gentle, and all who knew him said he was a good man, a hard worker, and a good provider for his family. They would also say he was not one to be pushed around.

## Chapter Two

His mind wandered back over the years.

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When I married Pearl, she was only thirteen years old, --a short thin girl, but very good looking, with the prettiest long hair I ever saw. I loved her at first sight. I was twenty-five. That was not uncommon in those days in this part of the country. She was very mature for her age, more so, than most twenty year olds in Butler County. She was an only child; Her mother had died when she was just eighteen months old. Her dad and her grandmother raised her. Her daddy, Malacai Duke, was blind. I knew a friend of hers that went to school with her. I would give her friend love notes to give to Pearl; she would send me notes back the next day. We didn't get to see each other very much, just in church or on the street in town. Love, though, is in the heart, and it inters through the eye. I wanted her with me for the rest of my life, so

after we had known each other for a while, I ask her to marry me. When she asked her father, he just about hit the ceiling. He told her she was too young to get married. She kept begging him, though, and eventually told him that if he didn't let her marry me, we would run away and get married. I loved her enough to do that if I had to. Mal finally gave in to her, --he never could say no to her for long. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1923, he went with us and signed for her. Her uncle, Willard Snodgrass, married us.

## Chapter Three

Then we rented a little house close to Mal. Pearl wanted to be close to him so she would be there if he needed her. That was where our first daughter Ann was born on July 6, 1924. She was beautiful with lots of pretty blond hair. Mal married my sister Angie. She already had a little baby, and Mal sure loved them both. We were all very happy back then. Our houses were about a quarter mile apart, we would stand in the yard and holler back and forth to each other. Pearl and Angie were very close; Pearl sure loved her new stepmother. Mal and I were good friends by this time. Any time I would go hunting or fishing, I would always bring Mal and Angie something back. We thought life was always going to be like that. Things don't always work out as planned.

On New Years Eve night 1924, Mal and Angie's house caught fire. They all made it to the door with Angie and the baby

following Mal. When Mal got out he turned to say something to Her. That's when he heard her scream. She had turned back to get something. Angie and the baby didn't make it out. Mal was heard crying out for her all over the countryside. It almost killed Mal to lose them, --they were his life. He never got married again.

I guess Ann was the only thing that kept him from losing his mind. We would go to church; Ann would take Mal's hand and lead him along.

After a while, Mal opened a store near Aberdeen Ky. He had a house right next to the store, and his mother came back to live with him, and to help.

We moved into a house close to Mal's store and that was where my first son Jim was born on January 14, 1927.



## Chapter Four

About a year after Jim was born, we packed up and moved to Illinois, where I went to work for the railroad.

My brother Savannas lived there and had a mad dog locked up in a room. He wanted me to kill it. I told Pearl, Vanis' wife Martha, and the kids to get on the bed. Then I got my gun and a chair, had him to open the door, and I shot the dog. After that my brother Savannis and his wife went back to Kentucky.

It wasn't long, that, we got word Mal's mother had died. I was working for the rail road, and There was no way that we could make it back to the funeral. Pearl was heartbroken and cried for a long time. She had been like a mother to Pearl.

I guess we were there about a year after that when we decided to go home to Morgantown.

It had been raining for several days, and there were floods all over the south. When we got to Machinrey, Kentucky, we couldn't get across the river because it was so high and very wild. We had to go around the long way to Morgantown. When we got there, the ferry had broken lose and washed down river. There were logs and trees floating down the river. Pearl was with child and very sick, so I had to get help. I kept yelling at people on the other side to come and get us. Finally, two men started to cross the river in a Johnboat which was leaking. One man had to row while the other dipped water out. When they made it to us, we all got in, and it looked like the water was going to come over the side. I began dipping the water out of the boat while one of the men rowed, and the other kept the logs out of the way. We all thought we were going to die that day.

## Chapter Five

By the time they got us to Mal's house, the water was all the way up to his porch.

Pearl was pregnant with twins. We took her in, put her to bed, and called the doctor. One of the babies had been dead for two and one half months, and she had gangrene. The doctor had to remove both babies and the other one died too. They were both boys. Pearl was sick for a long time. She almost died.

After Pearl got well, we went back to our farm. Things went pretty well for the next few years. We had some good crops and was able to save a little money and get ahead for a change. .

## Chapter Six

Our second son was born April 19, 1932, we named him Albert Estill.

Then one day, two young men from Aberdeen brought Mal to our house. Mal had a plan. He had brought us a carload of food from his store. The two men heard everything Mal said to us. He wanted us to come and take care of his house and his store for about two weeks. He had saved enough money to go to Detroit to buy a new car and was going to have the two men take him and drive his car back for him. Because he hadn't trusted banks since losing money in one in the Depression, he explained that he had cash to pay for the car and to pay the men to take him. When he returned, he wanted to take us all to California on vacation and wanted me to drive the car. I didn't know the two men, but I thought Mal knew them well enough to trust them.

## Chapter Seven

We never saw Mal alive again.

The next morning, someone came and told us his store had burnt that night and that he had died in the fire. When Ann and Jim heard us talking about Mal dying, they started to cry; they thought their baby brother Albert had died. I had to take them aside and tell them their grandpa's store had burned and that *he* died in the fire. I put my family in the car and went to Aberdeen. Pearl was heartbroken and she cried all the way there. The store and the house were still smoking. Mal's burnt body was just inside the door. The smell of coal oil was all about the place. A neighbor said he got up about Midnight to get a drink of water when he looked out the window and saw the store and Mal's house on fire. He told us he was going to break down the door, but two young men held him back. There was no law around there at that time. The two men were

never found, nor was the money. Mal was 46 years old.

## Chapter Eight

We decided to move again. Ann and Jim were very young, and Albert was just a baby. It was winter. I had an old truck and it didn't even have a heater in it. We loaded the truck; I left a place up next to the cab for Pearl and the kids. She fixed some food and took along a jug of water. She put covers in to try to keep everyone warm. We all just about froze.

When we got to the new house, the jug of water had frozen. I ask Pearl, "Why didn't you put the water under the cover?" She said, "It was under the cover. It still froze."

On one end of the new farm was a swamp. It was infested with mosquitoes. Ann and Jim

caught malaria from them. Every time I would plow, I would plow up a nest of baby copperheads. That place had more snakes than any place I ever saw. There were snake tracks all up and down the road where they had crossed it. I told the kids not to pick up any snake eggs because they would break and a snake would come out trying to bite.

I would go find and catch black snakes and turn them loose on my farm. The copperhead is their favorite meal. Our second daughter Mae was born on that farm on January 27, 1935.

## Chapter Nine

Sometime later, I sold the farm and took my family to Kofax, Illinois where we rented a house. I went back to work for the railroad.

I never liked city living worth a damn, but the railroad paid good money. Still, it didn't take me long to get tired of city life. I talked Pearl into coming home to Kentucky. I bought this land, about fifty acres. I had lived here as a child. We rented a place until I could build a house on the land.

The place we rented had a nice little house with a screened-in back porch and a fireplace. We had a barn and a chicken house. We had chickens, a milk cow, two horses, a garden and an apple orchard.



Then winter came. On January 31, 1938, Pearl was ready to have our third son Lindbergh. Pearl's aunt Ethel was there to help her.

The baby was trying to come out butt first, so I had Jim bundle up as warm as he could and take 2 horses to go get the doctor. It was about 12 miles round trip. They just about froze.

The doctor's hands were so cold and shaking, he had to have Aunt Ethel give Pearl a shot. Then, he turned the baby around and then brought him out. We just about lost Pearl. She was in bed for a long time.

That was a very bad winter. One of the horses died, the cow died, and I had to sell the other horse. Jim and I cut wood to make money.

## Chapter Ten

It reminds me of when I was about eighteen, and there was a flu epidemic. I think it started in Europe during WWI. People were dying from it all over the world. Soldiers would catch it and die, then would be sent home for burial. That's how it got here, I think. My brother Presley was in World War One. He, his wife, and their three children all died with the flu.

When people died, they would wrap them in sheets and lay them out by the road to be picked up. All of us kids were sick with it; my mother also got it but would not go to bed. She stayed up to take care of us kids. She died. My dad would not leave her by the road. Instead, he had someone dig a grave for him. He put her in a casket, put it in their wagon, took her to the graveyard, and buried her all by himself. We lived in Beaver Dam at that time; he buried her at Greenbrier

Cemetery -- about fifty miles round trip. It was wintertime, and bitter cold; He almost froze making the trip.

No one would even get close to someone that had the flu.

## Chapter Eleven

A few years later my dad got married again to a woman named Nona, She is a very good woman. Dad claimed to be hard of hearing, but Nona says he can hear what he wants to hear. She will sit on his lap, pat him on the cheek, and say, "My George." He will just pat her on the ass and smile. He spoils the hell out of her and buys her just about anything she wants, but she is a good woman and she makes him happy.

Every year on the Fourth of July, all the family gets together at dad's house. We skin a goat and the women all cook it up with all the trimmings. We would also make home made ice cream for desert. We all stay for the weekend. People sleep all over the floor and it is always a lot of fun. Dad loves having all his kids together. I always take him some of my home brew when I go. He sure does love it.

## Chapter Twelve

Estill looked over to his right.

Dad had this land at one time. The old house sat right on top of that little hill. It burnt down when I was a child. That's when we moved to Beaver Dam. You can't even tell there was ever a house there. Left unattended, the place just grew up again.

I always wanted to get it back and I finally did. It was all rocks and bushes. My oldest son and I had cleared it together.

I have 3 boys, 2 girls, and another baby coming as I stand here. Together we can do anything we try to do.

After I bought the place, my son and I built the house, dug the well, and finished the fruit seller. We are now getting ready to add a room. In a few years, this will be a nice place again.

My life has been a hard one, but many people could say that. It is hard times we are living in. We have just come through a depression, now it looks like this war might last for a long time.

I have been to Indiana and Illinois, -- I tried city living a few times. That kind of life was not for me. I have my own farm and (almost) six children. What more could a man ask for?

## Chapter Thirteen

Estill smiles.

He thought about the children he had been blessed with. His oldest was Ann, a beautiful girl, a little on the wild side. She is always trying to play tricks on me.

One time my brother Cleat and I were coming home. We were walking down the road to the house. On the bank beside the road, we saw a black man in boots, overalls, a long-sleeved shirt, and a hat. I said hi to him and he just lowered his head and grunted something. After a few steps I ask Cleat who he was and Cleat said he didn't know. After we had been home a little while, in walked Ann with soot on her face and hands, wearing boots, overalls, a long-sleeved shirt and hat. She was just laughing her ass off.

Then there's my only granddaughter, Ethel Mae. She was born August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1940 right here in this house. She looks just like her Grandmother.



## Chapter Fourteen

There was Jim, a big strong boy of fourteen. His interest is not in this farm, that's for sure. I guess I have worked him pretty hard for his age. He has worked right beside me on this place by day, and then worked with me in the coal mine at night. It will make a good man of him, though, and we can sure use the fifty cents a day he makes for working. Along with the 75 cents a day I make, we will do alright. I know he wants to go to school, but I need him here. A man likes to know he's passing something on to his sons.

I remember when Jim and I were digging the well. It was about twenty feet deep. I got some dynamite, went down in the well, set the dynamite, then told Jim to go down the rope, light the fuse, and then get out of there. He went down the rope, lit the fuse and started back up the rope. About half way up his cap fell off his head. He started back

down after it and I yelled, "Jim, get the hell out of there!" He climbed on out. The dynamite went off, Jim went back down in the well, and all he found of his cap was the bill. There is still some live dynamite in that well that never went off.

## Chapter Fifteen

After Jim had come Albert. He thought of a time Jim and Albert, had been somewhere... It was after dark and they were walking home. They had to pass a little family graveyard. When they got a little ways from it, Jim ran ahead of Albert and hid behind one of the head stones. There was a full moon. We had a dog that was all black except for his chest and neck which were white as snow. Jim heard Albert coming, and as he jumped up to scare him that dog was right in his face, standing on his hind legs. All Jim could see was the dog's eyes, teeth, and the white of his chest. It just about scared the hell out of him. Albert couldn't wait to tell us about it when

he got home. I almost had to hold Jim down to keep him off Albert.

Where we last lived, there was a bluff just down from the house and it was about twenty feet to the bottom. The boys would get a lard can lid and sail it back and forth to each other. We had a dog that would run and try to catch the lid. The boys would sail the lid out over that bluff; the dog would be watching the lid, and, run right over that bluff. I don't know how many times they did that to that damn dog. One day they tried for hours to run a blind mule over that bluff. I am glad that mule was smarter than that stupid dog. That mule belonged to a neighbor who would have been mad as hell.

Albert was a scrappy little kid, -- always giving his sister trouble. That boy reminds me of a young bobcat, always looking for

something to get into. He would not back down from anything, except maybe Ann.

Estalle laughed at the thought.

He looked down at the redeem to his left. It was full of briars, and it had a place worn out in the middle of it where Albert would get to pester Ann. When she would get after him, he would run and jump right in the middle of it. When the commotion was over, he'd then crawl out, sit down, pick the thorns out of his feet, and do it all over again.

There was the time I road the mule to the store. A car passed me and the mule started chasing the car. I told Pearl, "That damn mule chases cars." Later I found out Albert had been racing cars with her.

## Chapter Sixteen

He laughed again.

My youngest daughter Mae is a skinny little thing, cute as a button. She is so little, but sure has a temper. It's not hard to tell when she is mad at you. Her mouth will turn to the side, she puts her hands on her hips, and you would think she could see right through you. I guess she takes after me.

Estill turned his head and looked down at a little boy beside him.

Then there's Lindbergh, the youngest, at least for a little while longer anyway. He's always right with me, like a shadow. I have to watch myself, just to keep from stepping on him.

He thought about one time when Mae and Lindbergh had been at a neighbor's house playing with their children. They were to be home at a certain time and they were very late. When they got home, they told me that a

big snake was lying across the road and wouldn't let them by. They said its head was in the grass on one side of the road, and its tail was in the grass on the other side. Every time they would move toward it, the snake would raise its head and look at them. It was a good story, but they got spankings anyway

## Chapter Seventeen.

Of course, He couldn't forget his wife Pearl, of 20 years. He thought about how much he loved her. He didn't want to think what his life would be like without her. He wondered how she ever put up with him as long as she had. Then he thought about when Ann was about 3 or 4 years old. Pearl had hair that fell all the way to her knees. When she sat down, it touched the floor. This was the 20's and all the girls were cutting their hair short. Pearl kept telling me she wanted to cut hers. I loved her hair the way it was, so I kept telling her no. One day, she started telling me she wanted to cut it, and I picked up the scissors, took her by the hair, and cut it off real short, and let it fall to the floor. Then I just walked out of the house. She picked up her shorn hair, braded it, and cried about it for a week or more.

I sure hope she doesn't have as hard a time with this baby as she did with Lindberg. At least, if we need the doctor, Jim won't freeze going after him.

He turned and walked across the yard, down the path toward the road. Lindberg trotted beside him, trying to keep up. He was a shy little boy of 5 years old. He looks like he might be tall when he grows up. As they got almost to the road, Aunt Ethel opened the door and yelled, "Estill!" He turned around and looked back. "It's a boy!"

He threw up his hand, waved at her, then turned to Lindberg and said, "Well Son, you're not the baby anymore."

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## Chapter eighteen

*Out of the womb, and into the loving arms of a wonderful mother and loving family, I started my life...*

**My name is Alvin Ray Kessinger.**

When I was a baby, my mother would lay me on a blanket in the front yard. We had a dog, I think his name was Jack, and he would lay with me and watch me. My brother Jim was a big cut-up. He went in and got Dad's old raincoat, put it over his head, and then came around the corner of the house. They tell me, old Jack just about ate him up.

When they would all go out in the field to work, Mom would lay me on a blanket under a tree and tell Jack to stay with me. It would

take them until noon to get to the end of the field and back to me. They would eat lunch, and then do it all over again. The dog never left me alone.

That was copperhead country, one had bitten Jack, and so he would kill every snake he saw. He would wait until they struck at him, then jump aside, run in, grab them, and shake them to death. I think someone told me Jack got rabies and Dad had to kill him.

## Chapter Nineteen

One night my mom got up and started out the door to go to the outhouse. There was a full moon. She looked down at the step, clearly lit by the moon, and there was a big copperhead lying on the step. She woke dad up and told him. He got up, got the hoe, and killed it so she could get out the door.

Dad was an expert with a 22 rifle. Jim told me one time that we had all been coming home from church in the wagon, and weren't far from home when Dad asked Mom if she wanted rabbit for supper. Mom said that rabbit would be all right. Dad drove the wagon on home and got his rifle. He told Jim to come on and they started walking back down the road. When they got close to where Dad had ask Mom about the rabbit, he told Jim to be real quiet. They took a few more steps and stopped. Dad raised his rifle, took

aim, and fired. Jim said he never saw the rabbit until it came rolling down the hill.

## Chapter Twenty

About 2 years later, my Mother had another baby, Carlos Lee. He was born late at night. Ann had to help mom deliver him. Lindbergh heard him crying and rose up and said, "Where did that baby come from?" Ann told him it was what Santa had brought him, -- that he was a Christmas present. He was born very early on Christmas Day.

Ann had to leave the next day to go back to Indianapolis. Four days later, on Mom's birthday, little Carlos Lee died. Mom had to write to Ann to tell her. He was just too weak to live and died at only four days old. He was so little his casket was about the size of a shoebox, He was buried at Greenbrier cemetery, and his stone is only about one foot tall. I sure wish he had lived. It's not easy being the youngest child.

In 1944, Ann met a young man in Indianapolis. His name was Hardy Wilson. He was half Indian and had been raised around Bowling Green, Kentucky. He would do anything he could to help someone, but you didn't want to make him mad at you. They got married the next year just before he went into the Army; they have been married now for almost sixty years.

## Chapter Twenty One

Dad worked at Fort Knox for a long time. He would work up there all week, then hitch hike and walk home on the weekends.

Our family went to Indianapolis to live for a while, but dad could never stay in the city for very long a time. He finally talked mom into going back home to Kentucky. He had not been well for a while and he didn't want to die in Indianapolis. Later he had a stroke and could not work. They tell me he became like a child again and that he and I were good friends. I was told that he would lay on the floor and play with me like a child. I was too young to remember any of that.

After Dad's stroke but while he was still living, my brother Jim left home and moved to Indianapolis. At home in Kentucky, there was no one to work the farm. The food had run out and we had nothing to eat.

One day, Mom had made biscuits and we were sopping the biscuits in some grease she had heated. A neighbor had turned his hogs loose on our farm so they could feed. Hardy came in on leave from the Army, saw we had no food and asked Dad, "Why didn't you butcher one of the hogs?"

Dad told him that they were not his hogs to butcher, and Hardy said, "They are eating off of you." So, Hardy killed a hog and butchered it. We ate really well for a while. Hardy took over and did all he could until he had to go back to the Army. When the neighbor found out about the hog, he was



going to have Hardy arrested. Dad told him, "Do what you think you have to do. Hardy is in the Philippines, somewhere." The farmer let it go at that.

Dad had been such a hard worker and so dedicated to raising his family. I think we would have had a real good life if he had stayed healthy.

In order for mom to get any help from the county, she had to have dad put in a mental hospital. One time, She went to see him at the hospital. He asked, "When did you move? " She said, "Estill, I haven't moved." He said, I was at the house the other day, it was empty, except for the heating stove and the cook stove." Of course, he hadn't left the hospital. He died, in October 1946.

I was told when they went to pick up his body, he had bruises all over him, and was curled up in the fetal position. I was 4 years old.

When we moved to Morgantown, we left the cook stove and the heating stove just like he had said.

## Chapter Twenty Two

I guess your memory has to start somewhere. For me, it was at my dad's funeral.

We had moved to Morgantown, Kentucky, which is about five miles from our farm. It is a small town that set's on the banks of Green River. Morgantown is the county seat of Butler County, -- in the coalfields of southwest Kentucky.

They brought him to the house to have his funeral. As far as my memory goes, that was the first time that I saw him. Then again, I must have known him, because I was crying and knew he was dead. Ann had been visiting with Hardy's mother for a few days; she didn't know dad had died. She came back to

Morgantown on the bus and was walking to the house when she saw all the people. When she got close to the house, she could see the coffin inside the house through the door. She started screaming and crying. She didn't know if it was Dad or Mom. Mom went out to calm her down. She was also crying and telling Ann, "I don't know what I am going to do." If it had been me, your dad would know what to do. They put his casket on a truck and took it to the graveyard. I remember riding in the car, behind the truck that carried him. Jim and Albert were riding on the back of the truck.

After that, my memory comes together very well. I have been told we were very poor when my dad was alive and it was much worse after he died. We didn't get much money for the farm, just enough to pay for the funeral. The county gave us a little, --not even enough to buy food. Every house we

lived in was abandoned or just sitting there empty. People that we went to church with let us live in them. We had Aunts and Uncles in the County. They all had plenty to eat. I don't remember getting any help from any of them

I don't remember ever starving either. Mom would say that we would eat what God provided for us. Something always came up. We would trap a rabbit, or someone would bring us a chicken. I remember picking blackberries all day long and eating as many as I could. Mom would can them and make jam and jelly out of them.

## Chapter Twenty Three

The first house I remember us living in was just a little board shack with a tin roof. There was a bluff behind it. Mae, Lindberg, and I, would go around it, down a big hill, and into a valley. There was a pasture and it had a big walnut tree in the middle of it. We would go pick walnuts up off the ground and mom would put them in a cake for us.

There was a big old Bull in that pasture. He would come and chase us out of there. Sometimes, he would get between the tree and the fence and he wouldn't let us out for a long time. Lindberg would get the bull to chase him, Mae and I would get out, and then Lindberg would run and jump the fence.

There was a hole in the side of the bluff with about a six feet high entrance. It went back about twenty feet and was only about two feet high from bottom to top. We played in there all the time. We called it our hideout. There was a ledge we could walk along to reach the cave entrance. One day, I went down to the cave and there was a big rattlesnake lying at the bottom end of it. It didn't take me long to get out of there.

My Mother did a little cleaning work at the jail. She also took in washing for people. We hardly had any money, One day, Lindberg and I were playing and we found a paper bag with pennies in it. Mom took it and spent it all on clothes for us kids.

One time, Lindberg was setting off firecrackers, lighting them with a cigarette. He lit one, threw the cigarette away, the

firecracker went off in his hand. I laughed.  
He beat me up.

Mom would take us all to the river to go swimming. She would put me on an inner tube, and then float around with me. She wouldn't be paying attention to what she was doing, and then she would realize she was in deep water. She would really go at doing something akin to swimming to get back to shallow water, although she could not swim a lick.

There was a ferry that took cars across the Green River. I remember watching Albert, and the older boys dive off the ferry. After a new bridge was built, they got rid of the old ferry. I don't know when they did that.



Ann said she used to watch the barges as they went up and down that river. Way down below Morgantown Ky. the Green River is the deepest river in the United States.

Even though Morgantown was a very small town it did have a movie. Mom would give us a dime to go to the movie. I remember the first time I saw a Western movie. It was the greatest thing I ever saw. After that I would pretend to be the Durango Kid, Lash Larue, or Red Rider. The movie house isn't there anymore.

We moved to the other side of town, which was still not very far away. Lindbergh and I would play in the woods. He would climb up little trees until they started to bend, then ride them down. Then he would bounce up and down on them. Sometimes, he would bend one down and put me on it. I was only about 5 years old. I was very light, and the tree would spring back up and take me with it. It

was all I could do to hold on. He could have killed me. One day, he rode one down; his foot landed on a broken bottle, and cut his toe. I laughed. He beat me up.

## Chapter Twenty Four

There was a man that was supposed to be the meanest man in the County. One day he was making fun of us and picking on us, I think he kicked Lindbergh. Hardy found out about it. He found the man sitting on a bench on the courthouse square. Hardy beat the hell out of that man and told him never to pick on kids without a father. The man never bothered us again.

Hardy wasn't from that county but people wanted him to run for Sheriff after that. He didn't want anything to do with that.

Then we moved to a little house out in the country. It looked just about like the first house we lived in. It sits in a valley, and had

a little streamed running next to it. As I see it in my mind, it reminds me of a picture that I once saw in a book.

I can still see my Mother doing her washing outside with that big iron pot over a fire, and singing as she scrubbed on a washboard. There were many sunflowers by the stream. I would sit for hours and watch the humming birds. I was amazed at how they could fly upside down and backwards like they do.

Every night, Mom would sit by the coal oil lamp. Mae, Lindy, and I, would sit on the floor around her and she would read the Bible to us. Every Christmas, Lindberg and I would go into the woods to cut down a Christmas tree. We would drag it back, decorate it with berries, popcorn, paper chains, --anything that would make it look pretty. I remember one time, Mom made an Angel to go on top of the tree. There were no store-bought presents, just things that we

made for each other. My present to Mom most of the time, was a buckeye, or a pinecone, or a real pretty rock. She was always happy with whatever she got and so were we.

## Chapter Twenty Five

One day, we were walking home from church. There was a little road that went down to our house. It was about half way washed out. Just ahead of us, we saw a big rattlesnake crawling across the road. We look for a stick or a rock to kill it with, but couldn't find one. I saw a stick in the road on the other side of the snake. I ran and jumped over the snake and got the stick. Before I could get back, it crawled off into the woods. Mom couldn't stand it. She always said, "If you don't kill a poison snake, it will live to bite someone." I thought she was going to use the stick on me for jumping over the snake. A friend came home with Lindbergh one day after school. He stayed until after dark, then wanted us to walk him home. There was a rumor at the time about a white panther running the woods. I don't know if it was true or not, but many people said they saw it. We went down across the little stream using the stepping-stones we had

put there, up the hill into the woods, and through a barbed wire fence. We had gone a little ways, when Lindy and his friend let out a scream, and yelled, “There’s that white panther!” They took off running back to the house, leaving me behind. They jumped the fence, but I had to stop and go through it. When I got to the stream, I didn’t bother with the stepping-stones, I just split the water. When I got to the house, I was soaking wet, scratched up, and scared to death. The boys were rolling in the floor, laughing at me. When my Mom heard what they had done, she made them each get their own switch, and then she whipped them both. Lindbergh had to walk his friend home and come back alone. I laughed at him. He beat me up.

There were two or three other boys my age in our school. It was just a little one-room school. Lindy and his friend were always getting me into fights with the other boys.

Now, I never learned to fight very well, but I always let Lindberg talk me into fighting them. He would tell me how good a fighter I was, but never explain why I always got the worst of it.

One day we were walking his friend home and we had to go through a sagebrush field. I had some matches in my pocket. I bent down and set the sagebrush on fire. They saw it and came running back to put it out. It burnt about a twenty-foot circle, and it could have burnt the whole countryside. Lindberg beat me up. It was about a mile to the other boy's house. When we got almost there, the boys kept telling me they smelled smoke. I was asking them to go back to see if the fire was all the way out. They wouldn't go. They told me that if it were still burning it would burn our house down. I knew that mom and Mae were at home. I didn't want them to be burnt up, so I turned around and went all the way



back to where I had started the fire. Needless to say, there was no fire, or even smoke. They had tricked me into walking all the way back.

My older brother Albert lived with us there for a while. He had a girlfriend in the next valley. He would go to her house and stay until late at night. I remember hearing him coming across the hill singing as loud as he could. They got married not long after that.

## Chapter Twenty Six

My sister Ann came down, picked me up, and took me to her house for a while. She lived in a place called Tindall Town. It was close to Indianapolis, Indiana. At one time, it was an old Army Barracks I think.

My sister and my niece were going somewhere one night. I was to stay with Hardy. Hardy went and got some beer and cigarettes. He had told my sister he was going to put me to sleep. When they left, we started drinking beer and smoking. About 11 p.m. they came home. Hardy was asleep on the couch and I was watching TV with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. I was about six years old. He still hasn't lived that down.

I didn't know how to ride a bike. Hardy told me to take my niece's bike, go up to an open field at the end of the street, and not come back until I knew how to ride. So, off I went to that open field. I must have fallen at least a hundred times. Finally, I got the hang of it. I started riding back down the street. Hardy was outside washing his car. I was riding toward him yelling, "Look! I can ride, I can ride!" About that time, I lost control of the bike. I went right into about four garbage cans. Hardy helped me up, gave me the bike, and told me to go back to the open field.

When it came time for me to go home, they took me back to Kentucky and we got there well after dark. We couldn't find the little road that led down to our house, so I told Ann I could take her across country from the schoolhouse. She got a flashlight and we started out to find the house. Now, I had never made that trip at night and things never

look the same after dark. Needless to say, we got off the path and got lost. That was the field the big rattlesnake had come out of. About an hour later, we found the little stream that ran next to our house and followed it home. Then she sent Lindbergh up to the school to get Hardy and my niece. When they went home, they took Lindbergh with them and that was good for me. I didn't get beat up for a while.

While he was staying with Ann, they started calling him "Lindy" for short.

## Chapter Twenty Seven

Sometime after “Lindy” came back home, we moved to a bigger house the other way out of town. To reach the house we had to go through a cornfield. There was a stream with a walk bridge across it. Then, there was a little hill up to the house. There were two big rooms downstairs, one was a kitchen, and the other had a fireplace and a stairway that went to a room upstairs. It had nothing on the walls and we didn’t use it as living space. In that room, there were spaces between each stud that went down about a foot past the floor. One day, I was just putting my hand down in there looking for anything I could find. I pulled out a big long snakeskin. After that, I didn’t look for anything else up in that room in those sub-floor spaces.

Another time, Lindy and I were playing outside and we came across a big copperhead snake. We chased it under the outhouse. I ran

and got my Mom and sister-in-law. They came out, got the hoe, pulled it out from under the outhouse, and killed it. It was the biggest one that had been killed in the county. I always wondered if the snakeskin had belonged to the one we killed.

I was about 7 and Lindy was 12 years old one night when we heard the dog barking and we went out to see what it was barking at. He had a big opossum treed. We got a long pole knocked it out of the tree and killed it with an ax. Mom cooked it that night. It was the worst tasting thing I ever ate, but it did fill our bellies for the next couple of days.

There was a pond next to our school. Lindy, two other boys, and I decided to go swimming in it. When I came out of the water, one of my big toenails was gone. Lindy told me that a snake bit it off. I don't

think he was mean to me, --he was just being a typical big brother. He never used his fist on me; he would just slap me around a little. There is one thing for sure; he never would let anyone else lay a hand on me. There's not enough money to make me go in that pond today, but it didn't bother us then.

One day we were in school and it was pouring down rain. My Mom came to school to get us. When we got to the little road that went up to the house, the backwater was almost up to the main road. We had to wade water all the way. When we got to the walk bridge that was over the stream, the water was touching the bottom of it and moving very fast. Mae and Lindy crawled across on their hands and knees. Mom wouldn't let me. She put me on her back and took me across. We looked down there after the rain stopped and the bridge was under water. I think Mom was

worried that we would drown or get snake bitten.

Hardy and Ann came down. We loaded all we could into his convertible, and left the rest. A few weeks later, we went back to see if the rest of our things were still there. They weren't.



## Chapter Twenty Eight

We moved to Indianapolis, Indiana after that. If I could live my life over, I never would have left Kentucky.

Mom had to work a lot harder in Indianapolis, but I know she was willing to do that so we could have more.

I think it was 1949 when we moved to Indianapolis. It was a dirty little town at that time. The Monument Circle was the tallest thing in town; and, the only thing the city had going for it was the month of May and the 500 Race. It was still much bigger, though, than where we had come from.

We moved into a little upstairs apartment. Other than the time I had gone to visit Ann, I

didn't know what it was like to have television, electric lights, or even running water. We never had any of that in Kentucky. We had our first Christmas tree with lights on it there. It was the most beautiful thing I ever saw.

There was a little girl that lived downstairs. She taught me the difference between boys and girls, --but that's another story.

On Friday night, we would all go to a big church a few blocks away to watch Dagwood and Blondie movies. One day, we were playing ball in the street. The ball got away and went into the sewer. The young man that lived downstairs who was about twenty years old, took the lid off the sewer. We could see the ball floating on the water. The young man took me by the ankles and lowered me

down into the sewer, headfirst. I grabbed the ball, and he pulled me out.

When I started my first school in Indianapolis, there was one colored boy in our room. One day, I called him t “N” word. He beat me up. How was I supposed to know? That’s what they were called in Kentucky.

My Mom got a job as a cook in a truck stop called The Cat’s Kitten. It is now a Blue and White. Lindy and I got our first bike. It had no tires, and we used a broomstick for handlebars. It did very good on blacktop, but look out, when you hit the cobblestone!

One day, Lindy got into a fight with a boy in our neighborhood. The boy picked up a

rocker from an old rocking chair and was threatening to hit Lindy with it. Lindy hit the boy in the head with half a brick. We moved. The boy that Lindberg had hit had a little brother. He and I, were friends, so I went back to see him. I thought my nose would never stop bleeding. I guess we weren't friends anymore.

One day I said something smart to a man in our new neighborhood. He told me to shut my mouth or he would get his son to beat me up. I told him, "Your son can't beat me up." So, he went and got his son. That was the worst black eye that I ever had. I couldn't see out of it for a week. Who would have thought that a boy named Pinky could fight like that?

Two of my friends and I went back to the house that I had lived in and broke all the windows out of it. Needless to say, our

parents had to pay for them. Mom's share was about 35 dollars. That's just about what she made in a week at that time. I never forgot that.

The little house we moved into was almost like in Kentucky. It had no running water or bathroom but it did have an outhouse. It sat on a hill overlooking eagle creek. I was down on that creek more than I was anywhere else.

Lindy and I would build a raft and float it all the way to white river and then have to walk all the way back. That was about two miles. There was a deep hole down from our house a ways that we would swim in. We would be swimming and the muskrats would come out and play with us. We always skinny-dipped, so for good reason we always kept a close eye on the muskrats. One day I was down there swimming when three boys and a girl came

up. When they found out I was skinny-dipping, they told me to come out of the water. I said, "I'm not coming out with that girl here." They said they would throw my clothes in if I didn't come out. Well I didn't want to have to walk home that way, so I walked out of the water. I was blushing, and they all got a good laugh out of it.

There was a big iron railroad trestle over the creek. Lindy and another boy once carried their bikes up on top of it and rode across it. The creek was only about three feet deep there. It would have killed them had they fallen.

One day a friend and I had made a homemade go-cart and were pushing each other on it. It was my turn to push him and Lindy came up and ran over my heel with his bike. I kept telling him to quit. After doing that two or

three times, I turned and called him a Bastard. He jumped off of his bike and beat me up. I went home and told Mom what he did and he told her what I had said. She made us go get the switches and gave us each a whipping. My Mom asked me where I heard that word and I told her that was what the old junk man called his horse.

One day my brother Albert's car wouldn't start. There was no one around but me, so he told me to get in the car and push down on the clutch. He said, "When I yell, let up on the clutch, press down on the gas, then push down on the clutch again." He started pushing the car, and then he yelled very loud. I let up on the clutch and pressed on the gas. The car started and I forgot to press on the clutch and the car took off. He jumped on the back of the car and climbed over the top and into the window. There was a big curve and he tried to make the turn but it went over a

hill and landed up next to some little trees. I looked over at him and said, “We didn’t make it, did we?” He just laughed and said, “No, we didn’t make it.”

One night I was asleep and aloud noise woke me up. I rose to see what it was. The oil stove had blown up and my family was trying to put it out. Mae turned over a chest of drawers and broke a window with her elbow. Then she grabbed me and threw me out the window. That was good of her but I slept in my birthday suit, so there I was standing outside for the entire world to see until I finally got her to throw me a blanket.



## Chapter Twenty Nine

At one point, I had a dog named skipper and about four or five puppies. One day I was on my way to school and they were all following me. The dogcatcher pulled up beside me and asked if they were my dogs. I said yes. He said, "You had better take them home or I'll take them in." I didn't have time to take them all the way home so I told skipper to take them home. I told my mom about it that afternoon when I got home from school, and she said she saw them coming back that morning after I went to school.

We had a bunch of chickens. When Skipper would hear Albert coming up the street he would run and scatter the chickens so Albert wouldn't run over them.

One time I went to stay with my Uncle Vanis for a while in Kentucky. I took skipper with me. I had bought some sparklers to light. My Uncle decided we should tie a sparkler to the dog's tail and light it to see what he would do. I didn't like the idea but I went along with it anyway. When we lit it and turned him loose, he headed strait for the shed where he slept. It was full of corn and hay for the stock. It burnt to the ground. We had worked all summer gathering that corn. He went and got his gun and was going to shoot Skipper. I picked skipper up in my arms and told him to go ahead and shoot. Then I left and went to an aunt's house and waited for him to cool off. Shortly after that, I came home to Indianapolis and I don't remember ever seeing my uncle again.

When I was 12 years old, we moved into an apartment downtown. I had to take Skipper out to Ann's house to stay. We lived in

apartments after that and I couldn't have him with me.

I didn't like living in an apartment very much but I met a man there that sold newspapers. He would take me with him and let me help him sell papers. One time he took me to help him sell papers at Indianapolis 500. I thought it was great for a while, but before the race was over, I went outside, laid down under a tree and went to sleep. When I awoke, there were people standing all around me. I heard someone say, "I wonder if he's alright?" I just got up picked up my papers and walked back into the track. I didn't look back but I could hear them all laughing.

There was a big crash and a driver was killed. They got us new papers out there and they sold like crazy after that. That was the only time I ever went to the 500.

There was a place downtown called the Pal Club. I went there a lot. The man that ran the place talked me into boxing. I was overweight and he matched us up by weight, so, I always boxed boys older than me. I got beat up a lot. I didn't box very long.

There were three movies downtown and it only cost a dime to get in. They always had cowboy movies playing. Sometimes I would go early and go to all three of them before I went home. That year I saved a little money to get mom a Bible for her birthday. When she died, I got it back and I still have it today. It's almost 47 years old.

## Chapter Thirty

About that time I went to live with Hardy and Ann for a while. There was a girl that lived down the street. Her name was Carol and I thought I was in love for the first time. She had many freckles and was always talking. Hardy called her radio. She lived with her grandmother until her grandmother died. Then Carol had to go somewhere else to live, I never saw her after that.

One time I came home with five F's on my report card. Hardy gave me the worst whipping I ever had. I still remember it today. I was a stubborn kid, though, and it didn't help much. One day, Hardy had his car up on a jack. He was working under it. I walked up and kicked the jack and it fell. I guess I was trying to get even for the whipping. It's a good thing Mom was there or I think Hardy would have killed me.

When I went back to live with Mom, we lived on the north side of town. One day Albert came in. He had been drinking a lot and he lay down on the bed and passed out. I got in his pocket, got his car keys, went out, and took his car for a drive. I promptly turned into an alley and hit a building. It put a big dent in the right fender. I took the car back and parked it, putting the keys back in his pocket. The next day when he went out to the car, he saw the fender. He looked at it and said, "I don't remember hitting anything. I wonder what it was?" I never told him about taking his car.

When I was, sixteen I quit school and later that year I got into trouble and was sent to Boy's School for nine months. Hardy, who didn't want to give up on me, tried to get the judge to let him take me home with him, but

Judge said no. Life may have been a lot better for me if he had let me go with Hardy.

When I came out, I went to work at Western Union delivering telegrams on a bike. One day, I was on my way back to the office. I had delivered all of my telegrams. It was winter and the streets were sheets of ice. I came up behind a car at a light. I hit my brake, and down I went, sliding right under the car ahead of me -- bike and all. Even so, I worked there for a year.

Then I went to work at A and P as a stock boy. There was a boy that worked there, --I had met him at Boy's School. His name was Eddie Beers. He had a pink '47 Catty. We would go to a dance on Friday night, then load his Catty up with boys and girls and go to Patton

Lake. We would skinny-dip and drink until about three in the morning.



## Chapter Thirty One

I was about seventeen.

I discovered Elvis, and rock and roll, and learned to dance. I met a girl then, another “Carol”. She had lots of freckles and a beautiful smile. I knew I was in love. We went together for about two years.

One day I ran into a girl I had known on the North side of town named Crystal. Crystal and I started running around together in my '49 Chevy. Well, as luck would have it, Crystal and Carol were in the same room at Tech High School. They got to talk and that was the end of Carol and me.

My head has been filled with fond memories of Carol all through my life. I guess I never will forget her.

Then I met the girl of my heart, --Patsy. We had so many good times together. One time we were at a movie downtown when Patsy accidentally bumped into a boy. He turned and called her a bitch. I beat the hell out of that boy. “ Hay” I finally won one, but they threw us out of the movie despite my victory.

I learned that Patsy was pregnant with my child. She named her Sherry Ann. After my little girl was born, Patsy gave her up to be placed in a foster home. My heart was broken. I lost my girl and my baby too. I lost contact with the baby after that, and had no way to get her if I could have found her.

Patsy and I never went together after that, but we were still good friends until years later. She was killed in a car wreck.

I joined the Army and took my boot camp at Fort Knox. One day we had been to the rifle range and were on our way back to the company. We had to go up a big, long hill. It was so long and steep, they called it "Agony Hill." Anyway, I was the front road guard. When we got close to a crossroad, I had to run up ahead and stop all traffic to let the company go through. Then, I would run back up in front of the company until we got to another crossroad. After doing that a couple of times, I started lagging back. I found out why they call it boot camp. That sergeant put his boot right in my ass. I didn't lag back anymore.

I went to Fort Hood, or should I say, "Fort Hell." It was hot as hell in the summer and too damn cold in the winter. I was there for about a year. I got orders to go to Germany so I took a thirty-day leave and went home and got married. I married the sister of Albert's wife. Her name was Verda. After the honeymoon I took a plane to Fort Dicks, New Jersey. From there, I got on a ship to go to Europe. That was a lot of fun-- for about two days, that is. We ran into one hell of a storm that lasted for about four days. I have never been so sick in my life. I begged God to kill me or put me on dry land. He said no. When we finally did get there, I fell down and kissed the ground. (When I came home two years later, I took a plane.) After I was in Germany for about a year, Verda came to be with me. I was gone from home a lot and I guess it wasn't so good for her.

After about six months, she came back home.

## Chapter Thirty Two

Six days after I was discharged we had our first child we named her Sue Ann.

One time, Verda's family was having a reunion in Kentucky and she wanted to go. I only had about one hundred dollars and had no car. I looked around and found a 1956 Buick Road Master for Fifty dollars.

We took off to go to the reunion. When we got there, Verda realized her brother was not there, and she wanted to go see him. So, off we went to her brother's house. When we got ready to return to the reunion, the car would not start. It never ran again. You didn't get much of a car for fifty dollars. We missed the reunion, and then had to get a ride back to Indianapolis with Albert.

I started working as a roofer. We had two more children Travis and Melissa. Our marriage lasted about seven years, and then we got a divorce.

I left Indianapolis and went to Glasgow Kentucky to roof some apartments for a friend of mine who was building them. While I was down there, I stayed with Patsy's dad and mom.

Then, I came back to Indianapolis and stayed with my brother Jim. I met a lady that lived across the street from him. Her name was Lois. She was a lot older than me but she was a lot of fun. She had three girls and one boy. The youngest girl and the boy were still living at home. Lois and I lived together for about two years. We decided to take her kids to their grandmother's, and then we would go on to Nashville for the weekend. We had a very

good time in Nashville and started back home. We had only gone about thirty miles when I turned to Lois and said, "Do you want to stop and get married?" She said yes and so that's what we did. I always kidded her about going on our honeymoon, then getting married on the way home. We bought a nice house. Lois had a real nice '68 Catty and I had a '71, 450 cc Honda bike.

One night, we had been to her son's football game and had started home. I was on the bike and Lois was following me. We had to enter the highway, go about two miles, then exit the highway. At one point, Lois started trying to pull around me. I turned the throttle and started to race her. We got up to 100 miles per hour and she was still passing me. I turned the throttle up some more and it stuck there. I was coming up on my exit at 100 miles per hour. I flipped the kill switch with my thumb

and just barely made the turn of the exit. It scared the hell out of me.

I loved Lois very much. There isn't a day goes by that I don't think about her. I don't think I was a very good husband to either of my wives. We were married about three years and got divorced.



## Chapter Thirty Three

Once in a while, I would get together with Albert and Lindy and go out to the bars. One night, we were out together with a friend of ours named Don. Albert was driving his '60 Mercury convertible. He and Lindy were in the front and Don and I were in the back. The radio was on. A fast song came on and Lindy jumped up on the hood and started to dance. Don and I got up on the trunk and started to dance. Albert, not to be outdone, stood up in the front seat, put his foot on the wheel, and started to dance. We did that for about two blocks and jumped down in the seat and pulled into a White Castle to see four cop cars sitting there.

Lindy had that convertible before Albert did. One night, Lindy, Albert, and I were at Jim's house. Lindy was talking about how fast his Mercury was. Jim had an old '58 Ford station wagon. He told Lindy the Ford would run off

and leave his Mercury in the dust. They argued about it for a while. Lindy even wanted to bet Jim one hundred dollars. Jim said he didn't want to take Lindy's money but that he would race him.

They decided on a stretch of road not far away. They pulled up to a crossroad and stopped. The next road was about one half mile away. Lindy asked Jim, "How will we start?" Jim said, "Go on," and waved his hand. Lindy took off and jumped about two car-lengths ahead of Jim. Well, to make a long story short, when Jim passed the finish line he was ahead of Lindy by six car lengths. Albert said there was fire coming out of Jim's tailpipe. The next morning, I went out and raised the hood on Jim's car. Right on the breather in big letters, it said "Police Interceptor." It had been a state Police car at one time.

## Chapter Thirty Four

Jim and I started a roofing company in 1971. After we had been in business for a while we brought Albert into it. I love both of my brothers but they never agreed about anything! They would always disagree with each other, then turn to me to take a side. If I took one's side, the other would get mad at me, so I got out of the roofing business. Not long after that, Albert also left the company. Jim kept the company going until he died and did very well with it. Just as he did not share his father's dreams, though, his sons also did not share his, and the company died with him. Jim had three boys with his last wife. Her name is Jean. The sons' names are Jimmy, Larry and Kevin. They also had a daughter named Karin. Hardy and Ann always wanted a boy but never had one of their own. They adopted a baby boy and named him Hardy Bruce Wilson. He now has two girls and grandchildren of his own, he is also a very

good singer. Ethel Mae also married and had children and grandchildren of her own.

Albert's last wife's name is Joann. I had met her through a friend of mine. She wasn't going with anyone, so I introduced her to Albert, I don't think they were ever apart after that. She had a little girl named Betty. Albert loved her as his own. They also had two more daughters and a son, Anna, Lenora, and Albert Jr. Albert Jr. is only seventeen, and the girls all have children. Mae married a man named Bill Curry. They had a son they named Billy. He was killed in a car wreck with two other boys. They also have a daughter named Debby and she has children. Lindy had three children, Vickie, Lindy Jay and Amy. They all have children. I have seven of my own, Sherry, Sue, Steve (who was killed in a car wreck in 1988), Melissa (killed by a hit and run in 1991), Sherina, Sabrina, and Allen Ray. The girls all have children of their own.

## Chapter Thirty Five

During the few months before Lindy died, I went to visit him a lot. We talked a lot about our childhood and all the things we got into back then. I am thankful God gave me that time with him, but it was so hard to watch him slowly die like that.

In 1973 I found out that I had glaucoma and may someday go blind. My brother Jim also had it. He was almost blind when he died.

I don't have but a little sight left now.

Indianapolis is no longer a dirty little town. It is now a beautiful city and growing more all the time. We have pro ball teams, three races a year at the 500 track, and the monument circle can't even be seen unless you are on one of the streets that runs into it.

I hear that Morgantown, Kentucky is now the Catfish Capital of the World.

I lost my Mother in 1976 to cancer. She worked very hard all of her life to raise us the best that she could. I ran from my mother once when I was a kid. She made me wish that I hadn't. I never back talked or raised my voice to her in my life and I miss her very much and love her with all my heart.

In 1979, I met my daughter Sherry Ann for the first time. She was seventeen years old. I had kept in touch with her grandmother all those years. She moved in next door to her grandmother and she let me know who she was. I went to see her and we hit it off real well.

I started living with a girl, named Darla. We never got married but we lived together for seven years and had three children.

After Lindy died, Jim, Albert, and I went down to the old farm where I was born. The old house had fallen down except for two walls and the place had grown up again just like it had when my dad got it back 48 years before. I could close my eyes and see my father standing at the edge of the yard looking out over the fields. When I open them, though, I saw the fallen-down house and the fields returned to woods. That was in 1989 and I hope to go see the place at least one more time. I always wanted to go get the place back, but I am no farmer, and I guess it was just not meant to be.

## Chapter Thirty Six

Steven Travis, Melissa, Mom, Jim, Albert, Mae, Lindbergh, a nephew, grandnephew, and a niece have all gone on to join my Dad and Carlos Lee in glory.

At this time, I wish to recognize my brothers and Sisters and their families. I am better off for knowing them. I have been blessed with seven wonderful children, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren with more on the way. The Lord has blessed me in many ways.

My father was born in the nineteenth century. I was born in the twentieth century and I have grandchildren born in the twenty first century. Three centuries of history have produced who I am today. I am sixty years old; it is my hope that the words on these pages will be a



testament to the life of Estill Kessinger and his family.

All have passed on except for Ann and me. By the grace of God, we were brought into this world and by the grace of God, we will all be together in Glory. There will be no more hard times, but only good times. What a wonderful reunion that will be.

The End



Children of Estill and Pearl Kessinger

Taken in 1985

