

*The book explores the lives of a Christian couple who helped others on a mass scale, including those who did not have a home to live in. The couple was prominent in the community for their work and ethics. Unselfish and loving, they changed many lives by being an example, and leading many to accept Jesus as their personal Savior.*

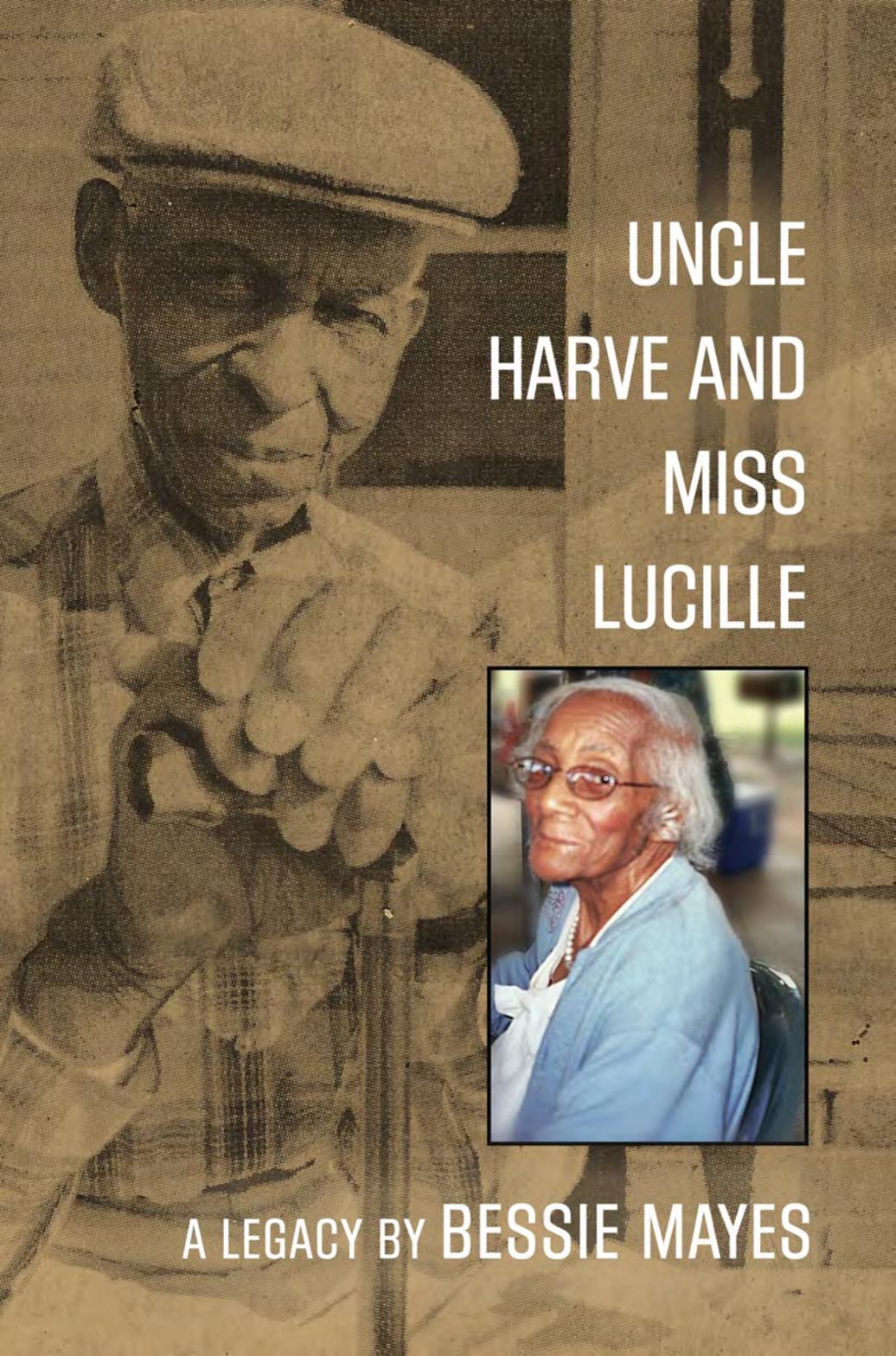
## **Uncle Harve and Miss Lucille: A Legacy**

By Bessie Mayes

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UNCLE  
HARVE AND  
MISS  
LUCILLE



A LEGACY BY BESSIE MAYES

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*Bessie Mayes*

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## **Chapter 1:** **Uncle Harve and Miss Lucille: a legacy of faith, compassion, hope, and love**

### ***The beginning of a family—the farm, and the Hinshaws***

My childhood is what formed mine and our family’s foundation for a good life.

Our family grew up in Taylorsville, North Carolina. We lived in a quiet middle-class/upper middle-class community in a rural area, a few miles out of town. Our home was a two-story house sitting on a large plot of land.

Our house had a very large plot, with a yard front, sides, and back. Part of the backyard was also the area where Daddy placed gravel rocks for a parking vehicle, with a wraparound driveway. The way our father engineered things, the gravel also allowed for easy movement for us and other people should it rain.

Near that area was a building built with cinderblocks called the “Well House.” Back in the earlier days of their lives, this was used by my parents to “draw” a bucket of water. The house didn’t have running water in the earlier beginning of their marriage. I mention this building because, as a child, my curiosity got the best of me. Afraid of spiders and snakes, both of whom were constant occupiers, I pretty much avoided it.

In my early childhood years, my parents gave me a tour:

Mama and Daddy allowed me to see the water after removing items stacked over the opening of the entrance to the well that kept inquisitive little children like me out. It was very deep, very dark, and very scary. Daddy said the water was cold and tasted sweet. As I became older, I was reminded of this well when I was sent to my cousin's house to play. While there with my cousin Mildred (Mill), daughter-in-law to my Dad's sister, I had to draw water using a pump. Their house didn't have indoor plumbing during the period I was there, but they did get it later. That was interesting to do, and hard for a little girl as I was. I'm certain Mama and Daddy didn't miss drawing water when they got indoor plumbing. But the well was the early days of our parents' existence. Our lifestyle improved greatly as our family grew.

Our home, with its large size, also had large covering trees in the front and backyards; trees that shielded us from the sun and shaded us. The trees' canopies were also a place where people parked cars in the many of my memories where the yard was full of cars, due to my brother's barbershop business and visits from family and friends. As the yard filled with visitors during the course of an afternoon, we moved with the sun as it rotated. Mama would say to the crowd there for a visit, "Well, it's time to move over here out of the sun." We'd all pick up our lawn chairs at that point and moved to where she wanted us to sit. Needless to say, there were jokes. "Okay, I get to sit closer to the shade this time," while we looked up to the sun for the best angle away from the beams. And for those sitting on their cars chatting with others, the complaint was "I've gotta move this car 'cause it's gettin' too hot on this hood."

I remember as an adult having to mow all the sections of this large yard with a push mower. Even though we owned a riding lawn mower, I never used it as I believed that it couldn't cut as neatly as the push mower underneath the long hedges and trees that

*Uncle Harve and Miss Lucille*

bordered the yards on each side. However, I have to give credit to my brothers, who did use a riding lawn mower successfully after I moved away. Perhaps I could have saved myself from being sunburned had I employed their techniques! They, by the way, tried to tell me that all the time I lived there and maintained the place. The boys—Pee-Wee, Jim, and nephew Jamie—were the ones who took over those duties for Mama and Daddy when I did leave. And they did a much better job!





The home had large rooms. My six siblings and I took up most of the rooms. The boys slept upstairs, and Mary and I slept downstairs. But our parents used the bedroom on the front of the house to remain as a guest room after our oldest sister Bettye moved off to Livingston College in Salisbury, North Carolina. But this land was not owned by us, nor the house that we lived in. All of it belonged to Daddy's employer, Mr. Luther M. Hinshaw, since it was located on his estate property. But Mr. Hinshaw and his wife never really perceived this as such, and called it Mama and Daddy's place, as did others in town. So, how did our parents get there? This is how the story and legacy begins about "Uncle Harve" and "Miss Lucille."



## Chapter 18: Howard (Pee-Wee) Mayes



Pee-Wee holding flowers from Miss Elsie's shop for  
Mama and Daddy's grave

*The Jackie Gleason Show* was one of the TV programs that we loved to watch at night when we were all sitting around in the den. We loved as a family watching shows like the westerns *The Lone Ranger*, *Rawhide*, *Bonanza*, and other shows like *I Love Lucy*. Pee-Wee was the Jackie Gleason of our family. Pee even imitated his

little exit from the stage after Jackie came out in his bathrobe and scarf to thank the live audience who were cheering him. He would flex his arms up and down and exit with the phrase “And away we go!” Pee would use that phrase every time he exited our house. We would fall over laughing.

His sense of humor was a God-given gift. He used his humor in our family to diffuse arguments between us as siblings. He had a very tender heart as well, and maybe the gift of mercy from God too. After Pee married Hazel, his first wife, I’d drive up and spend a lot of time with them on weekends at their home in the mountains. It was a custom-built home, built after their marriage. The home was of a style of newer brick homes. It was so beautifully built with a large front yard and backyard, and the design inside was the new trend. In fact, their house, when completed, was highlighted in the town, and the house was open to the public for viewing one weekend. Two bedrooms, den, living room, and laundry. It was a showpiece of its day, and still holds that charm currently.

Howard (Pee-Wee) was a professional truck driver. He and Jim worked together for a former company named Champion. They hauled paper products, groceries in refrigerated trailers, and furniture. They hauled practically everything, with the exception of live animals like chickens. Their drives took a long time. Both of them were gone for a week, going to various places up and down the East Coast and inward. On occasion, they would take a longer trip, going to parts of California. Once Jim had a chance to do that and came to see me. Stupid me, I was so excited that I didn’t have any food to give him. He was a gentleman, and stayed anyway.

Their work placed a hardship on their families. Their travels didn’t leave much time to spend with them, especially during the week. So, you can imagine how they focused on home chores like mowing the grass, shopping for groceries, or even having family outings. However, they pulled it off. I saw that with my own eyes. I

witnessed their love for their small children. Jim always had cookouts in the summer. Pee-Wee sat with his wife and watched the snow fall from their warm home. He also made phone calls to handle bills and other home-like issues. That made him very happy as I could see. Hazel was always happy he was home, of course. The kidding back and forth between them was hysterically funny. I visited them on Saturdays. Hazel would chase me away from the refrigerator, pretending that I couldn't have any of the food that they had put in there.

Tragically, Hazel was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After an operation to remove it, she was permanently paralyzed, and couldn't remember to form words. She sat speechless, and her sisters, who lived nearby, came to be with her as caregivers. Pee-Wee still had to go out on the truck to work, but on weekends he would come home and take Hazel with him shopping for groceries and other errands like banking. Hazel's condition never stopped her from trying. I learned over time that Daddy would go there practically every day, and talk to her and encourage her. That's when Hazel began her journey to healing. She returned to her old self with a very good sense of humor. Daddy spent many hours encouraging her to come out of her depression. He is the one who helped her walk again, and speak again. Pee-Wee was very happy telling me that story.

When I was there on weekends, I would pretend to be looking for food to eat in the refrigerator. She would protest by saying "What! What!" And come over to stand in front of the fridge to stop me from getting her food. We teased each other like this a lot. Unfortunately, I also messed up. Many times, Pee would drive Hazel down to "the house," as we referred to it. Hazel was there of course. When I was driving Hazel for whatever reason, I don't remember now, she wanted to go to inside the house. Well, she wore a metal brace to help her walk. She had often come inside with Pee. But he knew how to handle her, and he did with loving

care all the time. He would help her up the stairs and into the house and then out after visits. Well, Hazel asked me to help her into the house. I got out of the car and helped her out. That went well. But! I couldn't help her like Pee did on the steps. And we both fell back with me landing on top of her.

I went into shock mode of seeing my death from Pee-Wee. You know what Hazel did? She fell out laughing, really hard. She was lying on the concrete walkway, laughing! I got up and helped her up and back into the car. Fortunately, she took up for me for the incident. She told Pee-Wee she wasn't hurt. Pee laughed too, and told me that episode was not the first time she had fallen. They both were laughing at this point, because over the course of time as she learned to walk again, she had fallen a lot.

Pee-Wee and Hazel were married for over twenty-nine years. The first three years were blissful before she and he went to find out why she was having migraine headaches. Hazel underwent two surgeries for tumors, and over time they grew back. The last time the doctors noted a tumor, Hazel decided that she wouldn't have another surgery. Pee supported her decision. And they lived as long as possible, knowing that her time wasn't long.

Her death came while sleeping. Pee called me to let me know in San Diego. I had grown very close to Hazel. Pee and I talked a long time; he was upset. After the phone call, I sat at my computer and wrote a poem about Hazel. I called Pee back later and read it to him. Pee decided that the poem would be a part of her obituary at the funeral. I couldn't come, but he called me and told me that the person who read the poem had read it like I had. And the reaction of the mourners was overwhelming. He said people were sobbing all over the congregation.

Then, he was no more. Our last conversation was over the phone. He had had a heart attack, and the fall left him paralyzed

from the waist down. Pee had arteries blocked. Our family and Linda's family were torn up. Everyone was who knew him. The doctors operated and opened one of the arteries. Linda called to let me talk to Pee. He said in his usual funny ways, "I'm mad." I laughed and asked why. He said, "They won't let me have any chicken and pinto beans!" I laughed out loud. It was so good to get to talk with him again. That was when I found hope that he would live. I knew the situation of being paralyzed would factor into their lives. But I also knew that Pee had taken care of his first wife Hazel for over twenty-seven years. Then he told Linda to take the phone away. I was yelling at him by then, wanting to talk once more. He never came back.

A second operation was planned after he stabilized, to unblock the other artery. After the first operation, Pee recovered. In fact, he knew what had happened at home and how he came to be in the hospital. But just like his first wife did, and because he loved and trusted God to heal him, or help him, Pee took this in stride with his typical sense of humor and decided to overcome the condition. Linda drove the long drive every day to be with him, and in most cases stayed at her sister's house nearby. Pee had been sitting up the previous day with family who had come to visit him, laughing out loud at the cartoons. Pee loved watching cartoons, all day in fact. Junior had come to visit him, and as usual he was sitting up watching cartoons. Junior said he had sat with him, and they talked.

Linda, his wife of six years, was there too. She returned home just briefly to get some new clothing and to make arrangements at a rehabilitation facility, and Pee was fine. Linda is dearly loved by our family, as are her family. I remember driving her mom and Mama to her and Pee-Wee's house. I was shaking in my shoes. I was carrying precious cargo and drove as slowly as I could to get them there safely. I did with great relief. For Linda, her idea was to go home and return to the hospital.

The next day, on Sunday morning, Linda got a call from Pee's doctor saying he had coded. He'd had another heart attack and was code blue. Linda called me as she was driving a far distance to the hospital. She was distraught, and she couldn't find Buster, which made it worse. I told her to slow down and drive carefully. I told her that I would locate Buster and Jim to tell them what was happening. She wanted to know, as the doctor had asked her about resuscitation. I told her, after a minute, that since his quality of life would be worse, and the attempts to bring him back would in my opinion further harm him, that she should allow Pee to pass on. I learned later that she had put that question to Buster and Jim. Both agreed that Pee would not have a quality of life that even he could overcome.

The reason I told Linda Shae of my opinion to let him go was because I had been placed in a similar position here in California. A dear friend, Linda, and a prayer partner sister in the Lord, had to make this similar decision about her dearly beloved sister Lillian Taylor. Linda had called me around 1 a.m. to ask me to come to the hospital. I did immediately. She told me that the doctors wanted to know if Lillian coded, if the attempts to resuscitate would be enforced. Or, should the team of doctors and nurses allow her to pass without help or assistance. We talked again about the quality of life that Lillian would have if she lived. After a while, Linda decided to have a conference with her doctors. Given the condition of Lillian at that time, no operation could save her life. And her chances of living through an operation were very low, around five percent.

So now, a few years later, I am in a similar position with my own sibling's wife. I knew that Linda Shae, my friend, had made the right decision concerning Lillian's health. Linda allowed Lillian to go into the arms of God. And I found that I felt the same way now about my brother Pee. I didn't want to have to deal with any more physical problems. And his condition was such that he would not have

survived another operation. In fact, his body was beginning the process of shutting down after the latest heart attack.

Not being able to rouse Buster on the cell phone, I called and asked my cousin Mildred to get Buster or Jim, who were attending church nearby. She told me later that she had been recovering from a stroke, and hadn't gone out because she couldn't drive. But she drove her car to Macedonia church a short distance and connected with Buster and Jim. Then the boys with their wives drove to the hospital. But Pee was passing away.

Jim called me and Mary and comforted us afterward. We told Thomas, Mary's son. He was quiet. Every time the three of us went home to visit, Pee and Linda kept Thomas at their house, and Mary and I would stay at Bettye's and Russell's home in Statesville. Linda and Pee told Thomas that he was their son, and called him to talk or asked us how he was doing and sent their love to him. Thomas felt their love, and did feel like their son too. They would do all purchases for him on our visits. Thomas didn't ever worry about spending a dime.

Again, but in shock, the three of us flew home. The scene was totally different now. Sister Mom had passed on. Two weeks later Pee, who had just gotten home from a cruise with his family and his wife and Jim, was gone to Heaven. For Pee, I sometimes thought of his passing as mercy from God. He would have handled being paralyzed, and Linda had begun the process of finding a care facility for rehabilitation. Linda is so precious to us, as is her family Mary and Byron from Connecticut. When we arrived, we went to visit her. We helped with many facets of planning the funeral along with Byron and Mary, who had flown down immediately. Linda's sister Terry, and her husband Garland, were there as well, planning.

Pee was eulogized, and the most people I had ever known possible flocked to view him at Macedonia Baptist church. Hundreds

upon hundreds came to also wait for the funeral. Linda held up, as that was one of her concerns, and we all prayed about that. Afterward, when we began the drive behind the hearse, we saw a city police car escorting Pee and family cars to the burial ground. Behind us was another city police car that followed up the procession. Cars pulled over with respect as we drove by. In the town, the main street was opened for us to go through. But! What struck me was that Pee, who must have had a great effect on many lives in town, had them now showing it in abundance.

Because other police officers stood at street entrances to the main one, they had blocked traffic from entering the main street where we were on. They stood outside their patrol cars as we and Pee processed by under police escort. The police standing at the entrance of the blocked streets had taken off their hats in respect to Pee and the family. Junior's stepson Justin was there also in his police uniform. Junior saw and looked his way and we waved at him. The hearse and family were escorted a long way to the burial grounds, some ten miles away. We later returned to a repass at Macedonia.

Let me tell you, it's hard when these life things happen. The boys still meet at the barbershop, and Jim's son Jamie helps more now with Jim around the church. Mary and Thomas returned to Los Angeles, as I returned to San Diego. We are still in shock. God will help us. The following is a poem that I had written for Pee's first wife Hazel, whom we dearly loved. As I said before, it was met with great compassion and grief for the family and church after being read. Here it is:

**My Poem to Hazel: the first wife's eulogy**



*"It Was a Good Day to Pass Away"*

*It was a good day to pass away.*

*The leaves had turned red, gold, orange, and some green was left on the corners, just to let you know that there had been Some life, once.*

*It was a good day to pass away.*

*The air was cool enough to see the impression of your breath  
Made as it curled out of your mouth. Not yet frosty cold,  
Not yet.*

*On occasion, a bit of warm air would swirl around to try to  
Encase the cooler air, just enough  
To remind the cool air that there was still a little life left,  
In the passing summer.*

*It was a good day to pass away.*

*The children still play in the park, not wanting the season of  
Freedom to end.*

*Let's slide once more down the shiny glide, into the dirty pit.*

*Oh! At the end of those rainy, wet days,  
It had been the best way to lunge down the long twisting slide,  
Into the cool of the muddy water.*

*It was a good day to pass away.  
People would go about their way to church that morning.  
The sun would be up in the sky, shining bright, and golden.  
Burning the cold wet dampness of the morning dew away.  
Yes, it would be a good day today.*

*I knew, you know.  
I had known for quite some time.  
Way back, far back. A long time ago  
Back when They told me that I would not last,  
Pass a certain Time.  
I knew that They had been wrong though,  
About my certain time.*

*I knew that there would be a time.  
Just as Certain as I knew that the Sun would come up and dry  
The cold dampness from the air, from the leaves,  
After I had gone.*

*I knew.*

*That Someone other than Them would decide.*

*It was a good day to pass away.*

*My friends were saying hello and goodbye.*

*We had laughed Hard.*

*We almost laughed ourselves to death,*

*At some silly story my husband had told.*

*In our joy, in my joy, we knew.*

*We knew it would be a good day too.*

*But so soon?*

*I have laid with my husband, on this bed. Our Bed of Memories.*

*Tears.*

*Hopes.*

*Sorrow.*

*Dreams.*

*Plans made, some achieved.*

*Pledges broken.*

*Joy.*

*Laughter.*

*Love,*

*I lay with my husband, here; now. While he sleeps,*

*Peacefully.*

*I remember. I remember all of it, I smile.*

*I know that he'll remember too. And will smile.*

*Oh yes. Yes. Yes, it was.*

*It was a good day, to pass away.*



Howard, a few years later met and dated Linda Parks and got married in 2005 at Macedonia Baptist Church. They were very happy and flew out to San Diego on their honeymoon. They visited the ultimate warship Pee-wee and Linda spent quality time together with family and friends. Linda calls their residence location "Mayes mountain." She is originally from Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Linda Mayes? Our family still treats her as our sister. Because she is, as well as her family. We all talk often, and communicate in various ways. She and Fleeta do breakfasts together. Linda attends her namesake church, Parks, in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. She organizes events, and leads the local committees on personal projects.

Linda is working hard with a group of people, in an effort in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, to restore Lincoln High School. She asks people for donations to support the restoration. Our family's tie-in with that is that our ancestor's, Mammy Judy's, legacy is being renewed too. Elizabeth Grinton, a descendant of Mammy Judy, was a teacher at Lincoln. Elizabeth put on a one-woman show at Wilkes Community College. Our Mama was the descendant of Sue, one of Mammy Judy's daughters. See the details on Mammy Judy's lineage in her chapter. My hope and prayer is that Linda, who is following in my ancestors' footsteps, will be successive. I will know.

### **Pee-Wee's obituary:**

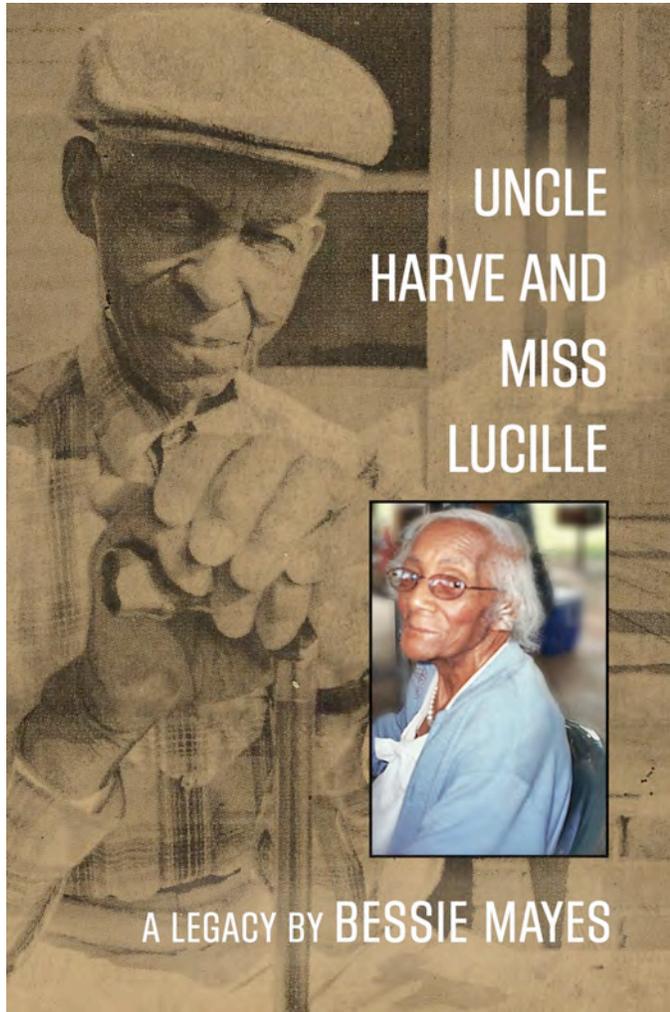
Pee-Wee, AKA Jackie Gleason, is deceased. He was a graduate of Happy Plains High School. His first job was at a furniture factory on an assembly line dealing with cushions. After a few years, he decided to become a truck driver. A firm that was a mile or so down a road piqued his interest. He was allowed to drive a truck around the company's yard. The interest in this realm remained. So, he applied for to a new company called Champion Paper. He and our other brother James worked there for decades. He was a lifetime member of Macedonia Baptist Church. The same one we all attended and still attend for a few of them. Pee-Wee was on the board of trustees, and an usher, and a member of an all-male choir. He got up early on Sunday mornings and drove the church van to pick up members who couldn't attend due to transportation issues or having no license to drive. He was married to Linda Parks, whom he referred to as "sweetie" for eight years. James (Slim) Mayes,

number four. James, or Jim, partnered with Pee-Wee as a professional truck driver. He has four children and one grandchild. He is married to Jean. He too graduated from Happy Plains High School. He is now retired, but working part-time at a trucking firm. Decades after retirement, Howard (Pee-Wee) passed away.

END



Linda and Pee-Wee visiting California with me, Mary,  
and Thomas at Sea Port Village on the bay



*The book explores the lives of a Christian couple who helped others on a mass scale, including those who did not have a home to live in. The couple was prominent in the community for their work and ethics. Unselfish and loving, they changed many lives by being an example, and leading many to accept Jesus as their personal Savior.*

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