

Gray
Cascade

Darlene Bieber Elsbree

GRAY CASCADE

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Published by:

Sunny Publications. Sayre, PA 18840.

1st. Edition – 2019 - ISBN-13: 978-1-7327621-2-1

2nd. Edition – 2023 - ISBN-13: 978-1-7327621-8-3

Although familiar names have been used, none of this story is true except scripture.

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Gray Family Tree

HUSBAND

Paternal Great Grandfather:

Peter Gray I

WIFE

Paternal Great Grandmother:

Lydia (Grace) Gray

HUSBAND

Paternal Grandfather:

Peter Gray II

WIFE

Paternal Grandmother:

Mazie (Meredith) Gray

Gray Family Tree

HUSBAND

Father: Peter Gray III

WIFE

Mother: Katherine (Richards) Gray

Children:

Peter Gray IV

May Elizabeth (Gray) Broderick

HUSBAND: Chad Broderick

Christina Mary Gray

August Lydia Gray

Kane Michael Gray

Adam Thomas Gray

Fannie Meredith Gray

Hazel Gray

Matthew Gray

Pearl Esther Gray

Richards Family Tree

HUSBAND

Father: William Richards

WIFE

Mother: Betty Sue (Harding) Richards

Children:

Dennis Richards

WIFE: Carol (Barns) Richards

Children: Dennis Richards Jr.

Rose-Marie (Richards) Kennedy

HUSBAND: Tommy Kennedy

Children: Dennis James Kennedy

Larkin Richards

Katherine (Richards) Gray

CHAPTER ONE

The Farm Next Door

Philippians 4:19

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. NIV

GRANDPA PETER GRAY grew up next door to a dairy farm. The name of the farm was called "Cascade Farms." He was an only child. His mother and father had another child after Grandpa, but the baby became ill, with pneumonia, and died three

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months after he was born. They tried to have more children (from what Mother told me) but were unable to conceive.

Grandpa went to a school located approximately two miles from where he was living. He had to walk to school. It was a one-room schoolhouse with only one teacher located in Stotesbury, West Virginia.

Stotesbury was once a bustling town and known for its coal mining. Grandpa would tell me stories about his childhood and how hard his dad worked. He described how his father looked when he got home from work; just covered in coal dust, from head to toe. He said the look on his mother's face was heartbreaking because she did not like seeing him work so hard.

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Grandpa knew right away that he did not want to work as a coal miner, like his father. He respected what Great-Grandpa did, but he too did not like to see how hard his father had to work. Not only that, Great-Grandpa used to get sick a lot. He was only fifty-four when he died from Black Lung Disease; no doubt as a result of smoking and working in the mines. Grandpa had just turned ten years old. Great-Grandma Lydia never re-married.

Great-Grandpa was good at saving money; however, what money he was able to stash away only lasted Great-Grandma Lydia and Grandpa a few years. She did everything she could to make ends meet.

Hard times struck my Great-Grandma

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Lydia and Grandpa severely the year Great-Grandpa died. Winter came in like a roaring lion, and it seemed never to let up. The first blizzard hit so hard that part of the roof of Grandpa's house blew away.

Great-Grandma Lydia had no choice but to use the money that Great-Grandpa had saved over the years to fix the roof. Also, she had to begin working as a waitress at the local diner, called "The German Café." She worked very long hours, nearly twelve hours a day, trying to support herself and her child.

It didn't take Great-Grandma Lydia too long to learn the *ropes* at the diner. She began experimenting with pie creations at home. She learned how to make the best pies, apple, strawberry rhubarb, blueberry,

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and even peach cobbler. She presented Mr. German, the owner of the diner, with a variety of pie samples, and he immediately asked her to bake for the restaurant and offered her fifty percent of the earnings.

Mr. German provided her with full use of his kitchen at the diner, and with all the supplies needed. Great-Grandma Lydia was a very talented and creative lady. Eventually, she was able to cut back on the number of hours she worked during the week and spend more time with Grandpa.

Grandpa was pretty good at helping around the house. He would make sure that his bedroom was kept clean. Grandpa even made sure that the garbage was taken care of daily. Not only that, but his homework

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would also be the first thing he did when he got home from school; right after he got a piece of his favorite pie, of course. His favorite dessert his mother made was apple pie. She would put extra cinnamon in it for him because she knew how much he loved cinnamon.

When Grandpa was a child, he was always so curious about the farm next door to him. He loved watching the cows graze the land. There were so many of them. He said when he was ten years old, he ran into Mr. Cascade, the owner of the farm, working on the fence that surrounded the farm. He said that Mr. Cascade was a really nice man and that one day, he asked him if he would like to come over and see the cows and the

rest of the animals: horses, goats, ducks, chickens, etc. But first, he would have to get permission from his mother.

Mr. Cascade saw the excitement in Grandpa's reaction to the cows, especially the calves. He fell in love with the calves and how they would suck his fingers as if they were a bottle at feeding time. He told Grandpa that as long as he had permission to come over, he could come over any time after school. So, he did the very next day.

Immediately, Grandpa knew he wanted to be a farmer. He loved all the animals. Every day after school, Grandpa went over to the farm and just started helping out where help was needed; without even being asked. Mr. Cascade saw how devoted he was to his

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work and saw how much love he had for the animals that he asked him to come and work for him. Grandpa said he ran home with such excitement and told his mother what Mr. Cascade said.

Great-Grandma Lydia wanted to meet Mr. Cascade first before allowing Grandpa to work for him. After meeting Mr. Cascade, Great-Grandma Lydia thought it would be good for Grandpa to have a positive male role model in his life and therefore, allowed him to work on the farm; but first, he had to complete all of his homework and house chores.

At the age of ten, Grandpa began working on the dairy farm next to his house. He was so happy. He said working took his mind off

the loss of his father, even if it were only for a few minutes or so at a time.

Grandpa had to walk to school every day. There weren't any school buses back then like we kids have today. One day, I asked Grandpa how he and Grandma Mazie met. He told me that he had to walk by this beautiful girl's house on his way to school.

"She had very long brown hair and these big dark brown eyes. I think that was her prettiest feature. Her name was, Mazie Meredith," Grandpa said.

He said that she wasn't a very tall girl at all but always dressed very nicely. The kids at school would make fun of them whenever they stood next to each other because Grandpa was nearly six feet tall, and

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Grandma Mazie was only five feet three inches tall. They both were twelve years old.

Grandpa would tell me that he tried many times to gather up enough courage to ask Grandma Mazie if he could walk her to school and carry her books. He knew though that he'd better stop procrastinating because of there being another boy who liked her. So, one day, he told himself, "It's now or never!" Grandpa finally got up enough gumption and asked Mazie (my grandma) if he could carry her books and walk her to school.

"Mazie, would you like me to carry your books and walk to school with me?"

"Yes, you may. What took you so long to ask me?" She said.

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Now, when you ask my grandma how they met, she would tell you a completely different story. That was always the talk at the dinner table. Everyone got a big kick out of seeing Grandpa and Grandma Mazie blush as they were telling their love story of how they met. Grandma Mazie said that when she was sitting at her desk in school that Grandpa would pull her ponytail or slightly tap or kick the backside of her chair. I guess that was considered flirting back then.

Believe it or not, when Grandma Mazie and Grandpa turned fifteen, they married. Back then, getting married at a young age wasn't really frowned upon as it would be in today's day. They had a small wedding

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ceremony at the church they attended, The Church of Christ. The reception was held right there at the building, downstairs. Grandpa invited Mr. Cascade and his family to the wedding. After all, Grandpa had been working for them now for five years; and he was only fifteen.

Great-Grandma Lydia wanted her son and daughter-in-law to continue living close by. So, she gave them a parcel of land to build their home right next door to her as a wedding gift.

The townsmen came together to help Grandpa not only build their house but also to build a barn on their land so that he could slowly start his very own dairy farm. One thing Great-Grandpa taught Grandpa to do

is how to save money and how to spend wisely. It did not matter how small the house was or how small the barn was as long as there was enough space for the farm animals and a roof over their heads, Grandma Mazie's, Grandpa's, and the animals.

They were feeling very blessed. Grandma made all the curtains herself for the house. She made a quilt for their bed out of old pieces of fabric. The ladies at church were able to gather together many pieces of fabric for her. They received enough plates, cups, silverware, pots, and pans as wedding gifts. Grandma was very talented in making quilts as well as her very own dresses to wear. She became the towns' seamstress.

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Grandma Mazie and Grandpa received their diplomas when they were seventeen years old; just in time to welcome my father into the world, June of 1939. It was a difficult birth. Grandma Mazie nearly died from giving birth. I guess this was why she never had any more children after Father. The doctor told her she would be unable to. Father said that when he went to bed at night, he would always pray for brothers and sisters to play with but, I guess God had other plans.

That was a time of rejoicing and yet a challenging time in our family's lives. Great-Grandma suffered a massive heart attack and died soon after my dad was born. Great-Grandma Lydia was laid to rest next to

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Great-Grandpa in The Church Cemetery, right next to the church building. Every time Grandpa attended church, he would always feel this sense of closeness to his mother and father.

CHAPTER TWO

Newfound Fortune

Jeremiah 29:11

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. NIV

GRANDPA HAD WORKED at Cascade Farms since he was ten years old. Mr. Cascade was getting up there in age. When Grandpa was twenty-five years old, Mr. and Mrs. Cascade had lost their three children

due to an illness that broke out in the town, and that cost each of them their life. When you lose your children all at once, like that, you are never the same.

Working on the farm started becoming more and more difficult for Mr. Cascade to run. He asked my grandpa if he and Grandma Mazie would be interested in buying the farm from him and Mrs. Cascade. Mr. Cascade had no other family members living. Mr. Cascade had taken a real liking to Grandpa, especially once he found out about Great-Grandpa dying when Grandpa was only ten years old and started hangin' around the farm.

They certainly did not have the money to buy a hundred-acre dairy farm; cows,

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working horses, and all its farm equipment. So, Mr. and Mrs. Cascade continued to work on the farm as best they could. They decided to hire additional farmhands to help out until they decided what they were going to do with the farm; sell it or continue working it.

Grandma Mazie and Grandpa thought about how they could purchase the farm before someone else came along to buy it.

They already had the start of their very own dairy farm (as small as it was). However, they thought they could combine the two farms. They both were only twenty-seven years old, and my father had just turned ten.

Father started working on the farm when he was ten years old (just like Grandpa). One

day, when Father was in the barn feeding the horses, he heard all kinds of noises going on, on the other side of their house. Bulldozers and excavators were clearing ground. A new family was moving into town.

Every day for nearly six months, there was so much activity going on next door. Father said that it was pretty cool watching the creation of their home. The neighbor used logs to build their home. It had a wrap-around porch surrounding the house. He said it looked a lot like his; only logs were not used to construct his home.

Father wondered why there was a barn, as well. Come to find out, they too, had horses. When the new family moved into their new home, he said he saw children his

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age. Father was an only child, so he was happy to see other children his own age living next door.

Grandma Mazie wanted to welcome them to the neighborhood by baking an apple pie and taking it over to them. "That's my grandma for you," I thought. Grandma wanted to let her new neighbors feel very welcomed in Stotesbury and their new home. She took one of Great-Grandma Lydia's apple pie recipe's and attempted to bake one like she used to. What can I say, God, blesses each of us with individual talents? After two or three attempts, she was able to perfect it. It must be that extra cinnamon.

When she delivered the pie to the new

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neighbors, they were so appreciative. Grandma also wanted to let the new neighbors know that her children were welcomed anytime to come over to play with Peter III, (my father).

Grandma Mazie discovered that her new neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Richards were both doctors from San Diego, California and transferred to a hospital on the East Coast for ten years before transferring again to The Beckley VA Medical Center. They were tired of the hustle and bustle of big city life and were looking for a more peaceful place to raise their children and settle down.

They had three children: Dennis, Larkin, and Katherine (my mother). Come to find out, there was only one child that was my

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father's age. A girl... Katherine. The two boys were much older. Dennis was the oldest and was just about ready to go off to college. He decided to become a doctor like his parents. Larkin decided he was going into the armed forces, the Army.

Summer vacation was over, and it was time to go back to school. Grandma Mazie thought it would be nice if my father asked my mother if she would like to walk to school with him. It just so happened to be that she was leaving her house at the same time my father did, and the two of them just started walking together. No one asked the other if they wanted to walk along. They just did.

My father told me that he and Mother would talk about the things that each of

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them liked doing; their dreams and what they hoped to become when they got older.

"I want to get married and be a farmer, just like my father. I want to grow the farm and make it one of the biggest farms Stotesbury has ever seen," Father said.

"I want to get married and have a big family. "My brothers are so much older than me, and so it almost feels as though I am an only child," Mother said.

"I think I would want to have a big family as well; I am an only child. And it can get pretty lonely sometimes," Father replied.

One day we were all sitting around the supper table, and I asked Grandpa how our farm became the size that it was at that time.

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He said that families were packing up and moving away from Stotesbury, one by one, because the mines were shutting down, and jobs were becoming scarce. Therefore, a lot of farmlands came up for sale.

Mr. and Mrs. Cascade were no longer getting around as they once did. Mrs. Cascade fell ill.

Grandpa said that he and Grandma Mazie sat down one night trying to figure out how they could purchase the Cascade Farm. They decided to meet with Mr. and Mrs. Cascade. They told the Cascades that they would be able to buy the farm via, owner financing. Mr. and Mrs. Cascade said to them that they would look their offer over and let them know. Grandpa said that a

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week later, he and Grandma met with Mr. and Mrs. Cascade, and they graciously accepted their offer. Mrs. Cascade's health had declined rapidly, and it wasn't too long after that that she had passed away.

Two months later, Mr. Cascade had passed away. Everyone at church, and who knew them, were saying he must have died from a broken heart.

Grandma Mazie and Grandpa were asked to meet a lawyer in the town of Stotesbury. They thought that it might have something to do with The Cascade Estate. They were concerned that their business deal between Mr. and Mrs. Cascade could become null and void.

Grandma Mazie and Grandpa arrived at

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the lawyer's office, and Mr. Bieber (the lawyer) asked Grandpa if he knew the reason why each of them was asked to come down to the office.

"Could this have something to do with The Cascade Dairy Farm?" Grandpa asked.

"Yes. The owner financing agreement between you and Mrs. Gray and Mr. and Mrs. Cascade is no longer valid," Mr. Bieber told them.

Before Grandma Mazie and Grandpa had time to become completely upset, Mr. Bieber said, "Mr. and Mrs. Cascade listed both of you as a beneficiary to their estate. You no longer owe payment toward the farm."

Grandma and Grandpa looked at each other, then back at Mr. Bieber. Each of them

became so overwhelmed and began shedding joyful tears. They were incredibly grateful.

After the completion of all the paperwork, and the deed to the Cascade Estate was signed over to Grandma Mazie and Grandpa, they went home to celebrate. They shared the news with Father. Before sitting down to a special dinner, each of them held hands while Grandpa gave thanks for the dinner they were about to receive along with praising God for their newfound fortune.

Slowly, Grandpa would purchase more and more land. He thought he would grow the farm gradually and so he bought property that encompassed our family farm

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that came up for sale. That was when Grandpa decided to re-name our farm. That was how The Gray-Cascade Dairy Farm came about. He wanted to provide future farmhands and their families with a place to live while working on the farm.

My father said that he and Mother were such good friends. They walked to school every day. Eventually, school buses started coming around to pick up the neighborhood kids. Mother and Father only rode the bus on rainy days. They enjoyed their talks so much while walking to school; they decided to continue.

Father was telling me that one year, winter came so quickly. He remembered

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that particular winter and how cold it was. He and Mother had no choice but to ride the school bus. Walking two miles in the harsh weather was something neither one of them wanted to do.

He told me one day as he was rushing to his history class, he saw a flyer up on the bulletin board, near the gymnasium. It was a flyer advertising the Winter Ball Dance. He wanted so much to ask Mother to the dance but wasn't sure if she would want to go with him. Even though they were good friends, he wasn't sure if she saw him that way.

Father saw another boy and Mother talking in the halls and said how it made him jealous. So, after school that day, he walked over to her house with a bouquet in his

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hands. He knocked on the door, swallowed really hard, took a deep breath; and there she was.

"This is the girl I am going to marry," Father said to himself.

Mother answered the door and said, "What are you doing here?" She was puzzled because they had just ridden the bus home together from school.

He handed Mother the flowers and said, "Katherine, would you do me the honor of attending the Winter Ball with me?"

"I was hoping you were going to ask me."

The dance was approaching quickly. Father said that Grandma Mazie made his tuxedo and that he felt like a million bucks. He put together this beautiful wrist corsage

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(with the help from Grandma Mazie, of course). It was lace elastic with a string of pearls entirely around it. On top of it, it had a beautiful red rose in the center of it and two smaller red roses; one on each side with baby's breath intertwining the roses; to match Mother's gown.

Mother wore this elegant red gown. The shoulders were bare. Elastic fabric from the waist up toward the neck wrapped around the neck and clasped together with a white pearly button. From the waist down, the material flared; flowing whenever she moved. Father felt so proud to have the most beautiful girl at the dance as his date.

When the band started playing "Earth Angel" by the Penguins, Father asked Mother

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to dance with him. And from that moment on, the two of them were inseparable. They shared their first kiss. Their hearts were forever connected.

Father had been working on the farm since he was ten years old. That was going to be his life-long career. He and Mother were now fifteen years old; the age when Grandma Mazie and Grandpa married. Mother had started waitressing at the German Café part-time and tutoring children.

It wasn't but a few years later, when my mother and father graduated high school. My father asked Mother to marry him. She said yes right away, and the two of them got

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married in the same church that Grandma and Grandpa were married in. They were seventeen.

Mother continued working at the café while tutoring children at the house given to her and Father by Grandma Mazie and Grandpa Gray. This house came with one of the parcels of land they had purchased.

Grandma Mazie sewed curtains for their home throughout. She also made them a quilt as her wedding gift to them.