

**The Life Story  
of  
Little George Havens**  
(1920-1988)  
Reprinted by Carl Langford

**In 1966** the Lord let us start the COWBOY CAMP MEETING, INC., located on Highway 84, between Coleman & Santa Anna, Texas. It always ends on the last Sunday in June. It starts on Friday Ten days prior to that. People come from all across the nation to camp and enjoy the various parts of the country to worship God. (Life story, with scriptures, is on a handout tract in very small print). He has preached at the First Baptist Church several times, during his service. One of Santa Anna's notables.

**Part 1 of 4**

I was born in Santa Anna, a small town in the heart of Texas, 17 Sep 1920, died 26 Oct 1988, in a farm and ranch community, to Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Havens. Dad was a World War I veteran, and upon returning home, he attended the Baylor Dental School in Dallas. Here, Ora Beth Havens, my sister was born. When my dad finished school, we moved to Leveland, Texas, where he practiced his profession, and became successful in several fields of endeavor. At age of seven I got my first taste of show life and liked it! There at Leveland one night before an enormous audience I was chosen to be the Make-believe Band leader and to sing to a little Spanish fairy "Yes, Sir, That's my Baby". Though the foot-lights and the great dark audience were frightening to me - Little George had gotten his initial taste if the great big entertainment world which would soon attract and allure him into it.

When I was nine, my mother and daddy were separated: and mother, sister , and I went to Dallas to live. There we found the going very hard. My mother could sure cook, and she started making plate lunches for 35 cents for anyone that I could round up. Each day the firemen from the Oak Lawn Station came and ate with us. Too, I sold some fancy cakes that Mama had made on the side even though I did look and feel very silly going from store to store with a big white cake that I could barely carry. I sold it, and did we ever need that \$1.25.

There in Oak Lawn (Dallas) all the kids were excite about the amateur contest that was to be on a Saturday afternoon at the Theatre. Nearly everyone that could do anything was in on it. I still don't know what got me back stage, but some of my friends wanted me to dance. There I was ! With striped overall son – and with the knees out – and I DIDN'T REALITY KNOW HOW TO DANCE – I had learned, I suppose, from watching some of the others. However, when they called me out, the pianist played "The Side Walks of New York" and with a little jib dance, a part tap, and a Charleston thrown in, the contest was won.

The kids went wild! I thought then that I'd like to spend the rest of my life in show business and maybe even be in "Our Gang Comedies" (strange enough, though many years later.

I did play in one of them as a "Robot Man"). How, I needed to have had my life built and molded around Jesus in those tender years. Any reminiscence upon my youth brings sadness, for Satan got most of it. Many years later though, I am made to think God for those principles which my mother taught me along with the standards and the norm that were set and given at the McKinney Avenue Baptist Church which we attended as children.

Mother became sick, and we moved back to Santa Anna, and there I spent much of my time on my grandfather's farm. There I rode horses and trick roped! I still did not forget the footlights and the lure of the show world. Every amateur contest in that part of the country was attendee and usually won by the "Little Cowboy". Bob Horn had taught me some rope tricks and along with my dancing, I would sing, too. I figured that if I could win one. I surely could win with all those at once. How I wish that my poor little mind would have been learning songs and the Bible for Jesus, but my mind was blinded to the Gospel by Satan. "But if our gospel he hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the God of this world had blinded the minds if them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them"

Many things helped to convince me that in nothing flat I could really be a star. I had much and varied experience in the amateur entertainment field having participated in the amateur contests, old time fiddler's contest, singing on KRBC Abilene and KXOX Sweetwater, singing on sale days at markets and at drive-ins, and even taking part in Anson's COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

People kept telling me that I should be in Hollywood. How I wish I had come to that Straight Gate and Narrow Way of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 7:13-14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate. And broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

But instead I took the bus with the door opening to carry me from my mother and sister to the glamour town, Hollywood.

## **George Havens to Hollywood:**

### **Part 2**

I was 19 years old when I reached Hollywood or (Los Angeles Area) and ready to tackle anything to get a job in the movies. I was about four feet tall at that time and weighted some eighty-two pounds. I had on a home made cowboy shirt and a 'please don't rain' wool hat (and it was raining!), and some hand-me-down boots with toes which stuck up like an elf's shoes, but I wasn't worried. I was in Hollywood, even though it wasn't exactly like I had thought it would be.

All the Studios had very high walls around them and very large policemen at each door. There was no chance to get in to even see a movie star - much less be one!

Cactus Mack, a very good friend, had pity on me and took me in even though he had a large family. They were surely swell to me. Cactus, it seemed to me, knew all the cowboys: Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Gabby Hayes, etc. Through Cactus' help I got on the stage with many outstanding persons even the Governor of the State. Everyone except the man who paid me thought I was in the movies. However one day while I was out at Hudkins Stables in Burbank exercising some of the movie horses such as Silver and Trigger (I figured that if I couldn't work with the movie people that I could work with the movie horses), a call came in from the RKO Radio Studio. They wanted a little man who could drive a team of mules for a picture called "Laddie" and I was to double for - of all things - a little girl.

The need of money and the desire to see the other side of the movie fence made me take the part. With my Levi pants rolled up under a skit and a wig on my head, I drove those mules before my first movie camera.

This was just the beginning. Since children have to go to school many hours a day (movie kids, too). I found much work as a double, stand-in, and stunt man. On the other hand, I, also played parts and bits (movie Citizen Kane in 1941). No. I was never a movie star, but I worked much more than most stars, and many times got more money than the child star for whom I doubled. Some of the pictures in which I worked was a series with Gene Autry as the double for "Tadpole", then with Roy Rogers, the Weaver Bros. and Elvira in Tuxedo Junction, the range Busters, with Ray (Crash) Corrigan, Johnny (Dusty) King, Max (Alibi) Terhume, also Jane Withers, Irene Dunn, Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney, and on and on I could go.

I thought that being able to work with the stars would make me the happiest little guy in the world, and it did in a manner for a while, but this kind of happiness is like the house built on the sand. It has no foundation because it is not on Christ.

It is only “make-believe”, so the fall has to come, and when it does, it is a GREAT ONE “And every one that hearth these saying of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

After I had gotten shook up when riding in a stampede scene in a Gene Autry picture, I got to thinking that there surely must be some other way to make a living rather than risking my neck all the time in the movies. So I went back to Texas. Everyone at home seemed proud of me and seemed think that I was really a success. I even gave talks about the movies in the schools, made personal appearances with some of the movies, etc. I had been on the set once at Republic in Hollywood with the Grand Ole Opry Gang and had liked them: Roy Acuff, Uncle Dave Macon, and the rest, so I thought that I ‘d go up and see their show in Nashville, Tennessee. When I arrived in Nashville, I went to the station to get a ticket. A fellow stepped up and asked Me: “Aren’t you Little George Havens of Hollywood? Haven’t you sung on shows with Forman Phillips, Spade Cooley, Tex Williams, Sons of the Pioneers, Stuart Hamble, and others? I told him that I had.

He said, “I’m Pee Wee King, who worked with Gene Autry in the picture, “Gold Mine In The Sky.” (Pee Wee surely did like Gene Autry). He said, “Would you like to join up with me on my show and sing for my outfit? There wasn’t much money in it, but I thought that would be a lot of fun, so I signed on. That very night I was there on stage of the Old Rynman Auditorium singing and carrying on with some novelty tunes. The people sure seemed to like the songs, and Pee Wee seemed quite happy, too.

### **George Havens his enter self tossing and turning. PART 3**

We started traveling then and I do mean TRAVELING. We traveled thousands of miles a week, and each Saturday night we would be back at Nashville for the Opry, then out again. My precious Christian Grandmother, along with mama, used to listen for my voice. And then would say, “Our boy made it back safe another week.”

Beer, whiskey, wine flowed like water those days, and I’m sorry to say that I tried to drink it all. Many times I’d come to just enough to go on stage and make a mess of a song, then back to the bus for another long drunk ride. I thank my Lord Jesus Christ that today I still make many thousands of miles, but I don’t need the help of booze as I go for God.

Man can never find PEACE in the things of this WORLD; his heart is ever seeking but never finding until he comes to Jesus Christ and lets HIM come into his heart and set him FREE through HIS sacrificial death on Calvary's Cross.

Finally after about a year I went back to Hollywood. I was twenty-nine years old and had been in the show business some ten years. I couldn't hold my hands still. My body hurt inside and out, and I thought that the only way I could live was to get another drink. How true that is, and how many persons as I, realize is true when one is blinded, bound, and at the grinding wheel under Satan.

I had heard a rumor that Stuart Hamblen, a long time friend of mine had gotten converted in a tent meeting there in L.A. Billy Graham had been in that wicked city and had preached Christ and His power to save from ALL sin. At first I thought that maybe this was just another publicity stunt, for they used to tell us in the show business that any publicity was good publicity just as long as they spelled your name right. I thought though that this was a new LOW to use religion for publicity.

One day I went by KFWB just to see for myself if Stuart really had been changed or was just talking. When, I saw him. I knew that he was different. He just looked different, and this change was good, for I could feel the cleanness of it. Association with Stuart . and wife, Suzy, and others who had been converted, brought convictions to my heart. One day on Stuart's radio program as I was singing "Farther Along", I began to think of what I would tell Jesus if He should come that day. There was surely nothing of good that I could say about my sin-filled life. I could visualize my plight and endless eternity in Hell which had apparently enlarged itself to receive my lost and unregenerate soul. I knew though that if God could save Stuart Hamblen, Tim Spencer, and other, surely then he would save me.

My heart was heavy under God's conviction, so I declined to go out to the Hamble Barn to talk with Stuart, and as the enemy of the soul would have it, Stuart was in a hurry that day and rushing to take a plane: I did not have the courage to tell him the struggle which I having.

I decided that I had better just go and forget this religion business before I made a not of myself. I thought, "After All" I am George Havens, and I have a job in the movies. Just think how lucky I am now after being converted, I don't believe in luck, for I trusted Christ). However God was not through with me, and sometimes He works in strange ways his wonders to perform.

## **George Havens hits bottom of the barrel**

### **Part 4**

The devil, was still in my heart, and had already suggested that I go and find a drink and put a bet on some race horses. But God by His mercy led me to stop at a Trailer Sales lot on Highway 66 in Duarte, California, that March afternoon. There I entered that establishment Cussin' and smoking. I had determined to put all thoughts of God out of my mind and purchase me a trailer to use for hunting in the mountains. I thank God for the proprietor, Brother Kline DeBowe, a Christian business man, who thought more about a poor, lost hell-bound soul than the dollar that he could make. He talked to me about my sins and condition outside of Christ.

He told me how Jesus bore my sins on the cross (Isaiah 53:3-6) and how Jesus knew even then that I'd come along lost and in need of a Savior and that He died and arose and was one day coming back to earth again for His own.

I asked if Jesus would take my sins away right there at that time. Brother Kline said, "Sure, right now even here!" On my knees there in that house trailer I asked my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to come into my heart and He did! He wrote my name in His Lamb's Book of Life, and I become a citizen of Heaven.

I don't have words to describe the joy that flooded my soul that day! Christ was so very near that I felt that I could reach out and touch Him. At once I loved everyone in the world and dd so want them all to know this wonderful Saviour that takes away all sin and guilt;

My pictures work was booming and I tried to tell the movie folks about my faith in Christ, but did I get a SURPRISE? It seemed that nearly everyone was very religious even in their drunkenness, adultery, etc. I found that this type of religion was man-made cults or consisted of some man putting himself up as a god: few knew the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, who is the ONLY mediator between God and man. I Timothy 2;5.

The last movie I worked on in Hollywood was a Sam Katzmn Production with Johnny Weismuller (formerly Tarzen), a Jungle Jim picture. When I came to work, I had to dress only in some trunks made of leopard skin, a wig on my head, and bones around my neck. What a sight and a mess for a Christian! I didn't even have enough clothes on to hide my small New Testament. But the terrible thing was that I had to play as if I were killing a man. I thought again of what I would tell Jesus if He should have come that day. I would be ashamed to be caught living a make-believe life after having been to the True LIFE (Jesus).

I turned about and walked off the Picture lot and quit the movies, the Guild (the Union), and told my Lord that I meant to follow Him the rest of the way. My friends in Hollywood told me that I was crazy, that I had gone off the deep end.

One of the friends, Little Buster Resmonde (formerly Buster Brown), came to me and said "George, If I believed in One as you do Christ, I'd never leave Him." Thanks be unto God I never plan on leaving him, and he will NEVER leave me.

Yes, Christain life is a REAL, and wonderful life. I'd not say it has been an easy life, because when you take up your CROSS and follow Christ, you are at war with the devil, the god of this world. And the devil is a good fighter, and he can turn your friends and loved ones against you and hurt you in many ways but when you KNOW you are on the WINNING SIDE, this makes up for it all.

Since, I surrendered to the ministry of Christ (Missionary Evangelist of Christ, I've preached in a greater part of the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, B.W.I.. Europe, North Africa, even along the shores of the Sea of Galiles where my precious Saviour walked and preached to men.

God has given me a good Christian wife (a former missionary to Mexico, Miss Lucy Lee), and we with the leadership of God seek to win souls for Christ wherever on this earth the Lord leads and we are looking for Glorious Appearing of Jesus any day.

George Havens has a beautiful Memorial at East end of Platt 4 in Santa Anna Cemetery. Go to one of the Cowboy Camp meeting in June north of Santa Anna.