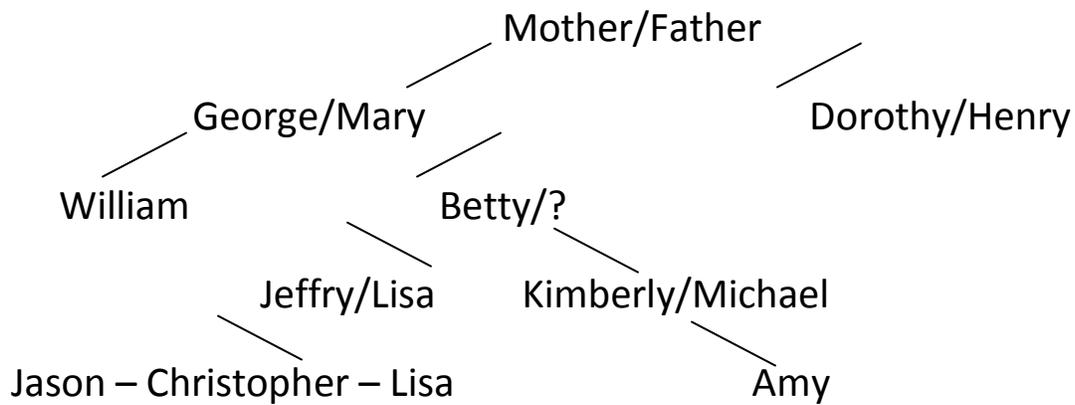


# *A Lifetime of Memories*

By Lee Giles

## George's Family Tree



Part of the Easy Peasy All in One Homeschool

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## Chapter 2

Tearing around the corner of the house, Christopher came running to where the two men stood out back. "Dad, Mom needs you." He leaned against the tree and caught his breath. A soccer ball sat wedged between his right arm and his body.

"Okay, thanks. Stay here with Grandpa George for me. I'll be back." Christopher looked pained and pointed to his ball. "I'll be back."

Christopher didn't argue. He knew it was Grandpa George's birthday party, and he wouldn't be excused from listening to his old stories.

George wasn't oblivious to what he was thinking but acted as if he were. "Chris, how old are you now?"

"Ten."

"Ten. Well, let's see. I was ten in 1910. Funny how that works. It's pretty easy for me to know when I was a certain age." He looked at Christopher who didn't seem to think it was really funny. "When I was ten, there was a big event. It actually happened twice in my lifetime and it won't happen again until the year 2061. Do you know what I'm talking about?" Christopher shook his head and looked expectant.

George smiled and closed his eyes.

April 20, 2010

"Father, how much longer?" George was lying on the grass in their front yard, staring at the stars. "How will I know when I see it? What if we missed it already?"

"It wouldn't be a fate worse than death, but I got it straight from the horse's mouth that we're in the right place at the right time to see it. The scientist in the newspaper said it's made up of water, dust and gases but it will look like a ball of light streaking across the sky."

Mother came outside carrying two glass bottles. "I had these in the ice box to help you endure the waiting and the watching." She handed a Coca Cola bottle to each of them. She smiled and sashayed back into the house.

They sat up and waited and watched and sipped until George jumped to his feet. "There it is!" he yelled.

Father got to his feet and put his hand on his son's shoulder. "I see it. Rather remarkable isn't it." George was silent as Haley's Comet streaked across his corner of the sky. "That was exciting, but now it's back to business as usual. George it's off to bed with you."

"Aw shucks."

March 1, 1913

"Son," Father commanded George's attention. "Learn this lesson. Benjamin Franklin was right. Nothing is certain but death and taxes. Just paid out what was due. Another day, another dollar and another nickel in the government's coffers."

"Will I be paying the government too when I start working on the assembly line this summer?" George asked.

“The government always finds a way to take from everyone. And you’ll join the union to protect yourself, but I must say they have cleaned up those factories since that fire.”

“That fire in the shirtwaist factory was awful,” Mother chimed in. “I think I prefer taxes to death.”

“Mother, that was a tragedy, but they are nothing compared to war. Just pray this country never sees another.” George sat listening thoughtfully.

May 27, 1918

“I’ve decided to join the army.” George looked straight at Father when he spoke.

“I knew you were considering it. You’re eighteen now and finished school. I’m honored you would consider making the supreme sacrifice for your country.” Father stood and put his hand on George’s shoulder. “We’ll tell the women at supper. Dorothy and her husband are coming over.”

Dorothy and Henry came through the door and Mother started chatting about the new grocery store in town where you take the food off the shelf for yourself without any clerk attending you. She showed Dorothy the Campbell’s can she had bought for the base of her soup, and Dorothy helped Mother set everything on the table.

The family gathered and shared a meal. Dorothy cleared the table and Mother served coffee. When they all sat down together again, Father spoke up. “George here has an announcement he’d like to make.”

“We have an announcement too,” Dorothy interjected. “But you first, George.”

George nodded and stood. “I’ve decided to enlist.”

Mother gasped and looked to her husband who nodded firmly.

“Why would you want to do that?” Dorothy questioned harshly.

“It’s my duty.” George answered.

“To whom?” Dorothy didn’t let up. “Why are we supposed to care about what happens in Europe? Why is it up to us to fix their problems?”

George asked Dorothy, “What’s going on? Why are you so upset?”

Dorothy hung her head and answered, “Henry’s been drafted.”

“Oh no.” Mother reached over and put her hand on Dorothy’s.

## Chapter 2

### What I know...

- Haley's Comet did make an appearance April 10, 2010.
- Coca Cola was introduced in the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- New phrases this decade were: aw shucks, business as usual, straight from the horse's mouth, fate worse than death, another day another dollar, to make the supreme sacrifice
- Personal income tax was introduced in 1913 and was due on March 1. It wasn't moved to its April 15<sup>th</sup> date until 1955.
- Mother refers to the Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, which led to regulations in the workplace to protect workers.
- WWI began in the summer of 1914
- The US entered the war in 1917
- The first self-serve grocery store was opened this decade (I've read conflicting dates.)
- Campbell's soup was promoted as ingredients to help the burdened housewife.

### Other news in the world...

- 1912 The Titanic sunk
- 1913 The assembly line was used
- 1914 Archduke Ferdinand assassinated  
WWI started  
Panama Canal opened  
First traffic light
- 1915 *Lusitania* sunk by German U-boat
- 1919 Treaty of Versailles