

Paul Linder

Written and Narrated by David Christensen

Good afternoon. I am Paul Linder. I didn't know exactly how to dress today—as a preacher, an army sergeant, businessman, politician, an engineer, or a farmer. Since we are close to one of our farms, I decided to wear my chore clothes. You may notice I've tied my pant legs. I'm often down on my knees working on some equipment. With all the feedstuffs around, mice just seem to crawl inside my jeans.

I was born in 1923, and died in a farm accident in 1985. Our home, Sunnyside Livestock Farm, as my mother Pauline named it, is just a mile right north of town on Central Avenue. My Grandfather Henry bought the first eighty in 1888. We were designated a Century Farm in August of 1988. I lived on that place all my life, except time away for college, the army, and three years as head engineer for AO Smith in Illinois.

I attended a rural school one mile north of our west corner. I graduated from Hartley High School in 1941 and from Iowa State with a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering in 1952. Not many people take eleven years to get a B.S. but after a couple of years of college, I served nearly three years in the Army in England and France.

I was there when the Germans bombed England. There I met a family who has remained our friends to this day. In France I was in charge of four enlistees and one-hundred prisoners. On Christmas of 1946, the prisoners presented me with a hand carved plaque and a hand-made card. That was and still remains a very touching moment.

One summer three of my college friends and I modified a jeep with an extra fuel barrel and an extended rear with nets so we could sleep in the jeep. We headed for the Panama Canal. Roads were bad—when there were any roads—so we got only as far as Nicaragua before we had to turn around and get back to college. We cooked pancakes on an iron skillet. I could flip them without using a spatula.

Small children along the way got a kick out of watching that. I kept that pan and cooked pancakes on every camping trip our family took.

In the fall of 1949, I stayed home and helped my dad build a new house. That fall I also met the new Hartley second-grade teacher, Bonnie Harms, from Archer. We were married during Iowa State's spring break in 1951. That was a week of snow storms, and we had to postpone the wedding three times. When I called KICD, I assured them the delay was due to the weather and not a change of heart.

We raised five children, one boy and four girls, on the Linder Family Farm. Each child took an active part in the farm operation. Every day, I would stop chores at 7 AM for our family breakfast. Everyone read a part of the *Upper Room* devotional. If anyone came to the table grumpy or down in the dumps, I would make a terrible face and say, "Ruf, Ruf" and that would bring a smile.

During my last year of Ag Engineering at Iowa State, I planned and drew an automated cattle-feeding set-up that included sealed crop processors called blue Harvestors. Bonnie and I came back to the farm and built that plan on Sunny Side Farm.. People came from all over to see what we were doing. Publications, such as the *Farm Journal*, did feature stories about our farm. Many farmers asked me to design set-ups for their operations.

In 1959, I took a position as head Ag Engineer for AO Smith in Illinois. While there, we developed a booklet featuring some of my plans. During those three years we made many friends and contacts that kept my Ag Engineering Consulting Service busy until the day I died.

Church and community were important to me. Ideas seemed to flow from my mind like I was hand-tossing seeds in front of me. I did my best to get those seeds growing. I was a senior high Sunday school teacher and counselor for many years in the Methodist Church. We took three different mission trips; one to New Mexico, another to Mexico, and the third to a coal mining area in Virginia. On those trips, I told the kids to take a jar of peanut butter and a loaf of bread, and learn to sleep quickly because we were going to travel non-stop except to stop for gasoline.

I served many church positions, including that of lay speaker. During one three-month period I helped the Larabee Church as their guest speaker. I would come in from chores just in time to clean up, grab some clothes and head off to church.

In the 1960s, we decided to build a new United Methodist Church west of town. We thought it would be a good idea to have a bell tower with a cross on top, at about the middle of the layout. Dan Shinkle and I visited quite a few churches, looking at different towers. I came back and drew the one you can see at the church.

We built it in Shinkle's new shed. I never walked away from a challenge. I told myself the impossible will just take a little longer. Well, when Dan was splitting those huge beams for the tower, they warped. I had to come up with a way to straighten them out. We also had to put the whole tower on an axis, so it could be rotated to weld and paint.

When we were finished, I took the back end out of my large manure spreader, split some flat rock running gears, and we got it into the church. We hired a crane to set it onto the base we'd built. It all fit—just right. The project was so important to us that my family put a bell tower on my tombstone, which is just south of the cemetery flagpole.

Through the Society of Ag Engineers and Farm Bureau, I was invited to present my thoughts on the future of agriculture to colleagues at annual meetings, at ISU facility seminars, and congressional hearings. I enjoyed being chair of the Hartley Republicans, the local lodge brought brotherly closeness, and the Lions Club opened other ways to serve here as well as internationally. The local Lions asked me to draw plans for dugouts and press boxes for the new softball and baseball fields at the high school. We Lions constructed them,

Our son, Mark, who works in California, thought people would like to know where their food comes from, and they would like it grown without antibiotics and hormones. We have done the paper work done with regulators in Washington DC, and raised a portion of our cattle in this manner. They were processed and boxed here in Hartley in the beef fabricating plant, and sent to California as Linder

Family Farm Beef. I think this is going to be a part of the future and we need to get more farmers interested.

I know my time is up, but I would like to share a bit of philosophy with you. Whoever you are with, a fellow worker, a committee member, an employee; if you would just say or do something to bring out the best in someone else, you will both have a better day.