

Lelia Pearl Legassie

She was born Lelia Pearl Legassie, on April 24, 1892, on a farm in Dufferin, near Chipman. She was the second of seven children born to Newton and Sarah Jane (Allen) Legassie. She lived her entire childhood in Dufferin, except for a year she spent in Berlin, New Hampshire with her father.

In 1908 she was wed to John Doherty, and moved to Chipman when her husband purchased a home in 1915. Except for a few years spent in North Kanes (a railway station where John Doherty was section foreman), she was to spend her entire life in this home. Lelia's first-born child was a son Alfred. Then came Murray (Purdy), Pearl, Greta, Hazel, Allie (Alberta), Net (Juanita) and Hubert. In 1926, her youngest child, Hubert, died at the age of six months. That same year (April), 1926, her husband, John, died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-nine. Lelia was left a widow with seven children.

She was remarried in 1927 to Claude Bishop. From this marriage came a son, Leslie, then two more daughters, Shirley and Bernice, and a baby stillborn. Her son, Leslie, died at the age of seven.

Lelia's mother, Sarah, died when she was still a young woman. Her father then married Marjorie Laskey. One child was born of this marriage, a son, Clifford. She also lost her sister, Lulu. Newton Legassie died in 1937.

During the 1940's, Lelia's sister, Jessie (Mrs. Elbert Northrup), died of cancer. It was also during this time that her eldest brother, Emery, whom she had not seen for many, many years came to visit her. During the following years, Emery and his family made many summer visits. In the winter of 1961(2), in Berlin, New Hampshire, Emery died suddenly of a heart attack at his home.

Suddenly, in apparently good health, Lelia died early on Friday morning, February 7, 1964. She was brought to rest at the home of her eldest daughter, Pearl, where funeral services were held on Sunday, Feb. 9, 1964. She was interred in the Red Bank Cemetery following the service.

Lelia was survived by her husband, Claude, two sons, Alfred and Murray (Purdy) Doherty, and seven daughters: Pearl (Mrs. Cecil Rogers), Greta (Mrs. Osie Pine), Hazel (Mrs. Borden Mowatt), Alberta, "Allie" (Mrs. Gray Bishop), Jaunita "Net" (Mrs. Carl Pyne), Shirley (Mrs. Kenneth Clark), and Bernice (Mrs. Newton Smith). She left behind 32 surviving grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren. Also remaining was her stepmother, Marjorie, one sister, Ina (Mrs. Russell Lemon), two brothers, Walter & Newton, a half-brother, Clifford Legassie and numerous nieces and nephews.

The above-mentioned facts concerning the life of Lelia Pearl (*Legassie*) *Doherty* Bishop give very little insight as to the kind of woman she actually was. From this account, a person who did not know her can see that she came from a fairly large family and reared a large family of her own. Another thing *that* is really apparent from reading this account is that Lelia suffered a great deal of personal tragedy and sorrow. As was above mentioned she lost both her son and husband in the same year. One may think she had a right to be an embittered woman from whom life had taken much and had returned little.

But Lelia had the gift she treasured most, the gift of life itself. And installed in her was the wonderful virtue of how this gift best, in the services of others. Her reward from life was love. Love and the respect and admiration of countless numbers of people. Not only her immediate family, but from those many people whom she helped and guided during her fruitful lifetime.

One only had to be at the home of her eldest daughter, Pearl, where she was brought to rest following her death to know how much she was loved. The many floral tributes (52 in all) tell part of the story. Also you would have seen an entire community turn out to pay their final respects to this truly remarkable woman.

Perhaps it was through her own many personal tragedies and sorrows that Lelia received the gift of compassion for those suffering and in need. And when there was a need, she was there, caring for the sick and infirmed, consoling the family at the loss of a loved one, and always giving, giving, giving of herself. By her own actual account, Lelia delivered, or aided in delivery, of over one hundred babies. What a joy it was to her, especially when one happened to be a new grandchild. She also tended the mothers of these children until they were able to care for themselves and their new babies.

Before the community had the services of an undertaker, she assisted many families in preparing their dead for burial. Although she did not relish this task, she could not refuse these people in their hour of need and sorrow. Lelia was a living example of the greatness a person can achieve if they follow the simple commandment of God "love thy neighbour as thyself".

Although her services to the needy demanded much of her time and energy, she still had time for her family. She shared in their sorrows and disappointments, their joys and achievements.

She, herself, one walked in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. During the time of this near fatal illness, she had her brother-in-law, Russell Lemon, come to her and recite her favorite prayer, Psalm 23: - The Lord is My Shepherd; I Shall not Want". She put her fate entirely in the hands of the master she served, and with the prayers of the many loved ones, and the blood of her brother, Newton, her precious life was saved.

In her later years, Lelia spent most of her time in her home. But when she was unable to come to the world she served, the world came to her. There was always a child or grandchild or one of her many friends to keep her company during these years spent at home. Unlike many elderly people who spent their twilight years in loneliness, the world she loved and served, and which loved her in return, refused to give her time to even a twinge of loneliness. Although many elderly people spent their last years living in the past, this was not so with this remarkable woman. She was as up to date as tomorrows' newspaper. What joy she had when her family made her a gift of a television set for Christmas several years before her death. But I believe it was an even greater joy for the family to give this pleasure to her.

I personally *remember* the many visits to my grandmother with a sense of guilt. For I, too, demanded of her and offered nothing in return for the advice and counsel she gave. But I gave her the thing she cherished, - my love.

Although she professed no religious affiliation with any church, she was the most devoutly Christian person I have ever known. Her religion was not nearly a lip services to God, but a quiet, simple and firm belief and faith in God's teachings - His love and His Mercy. She was what God teaches us all to be — a giver rather than a receiver. Nothing in this cruel inhuman world shocked her. But much grieved and dismayed her. She had great compassion for those who suffered poverty, neglect, hunger and disease. She mourned practically for children who were abandoned by their parents, for Lelia had a great love for children.

Those whose life she touched have been enriched beyond measure.

Those of us whom are left to mourn ask why her life should be taken so suddenly when she was enjoying such apparent good health. She was so young and alive in spirit and was enjoying her life to the brim at an age when most people live in past reflections. But she would have been the same at ninety or even one hundred. I know she would. Instead of asking this question, we should be giving thanks that we were chosen to be the family of this remarkable woman. We have been singularly blessed to be the offspring and descendants of this Child of God. For few people have such a distinction and are left such a rich heritage.

Lelia looked for only two things in life — one was to be ever near the ones she loved, and the other was to leave her world quickly and quietly without suffering or malingering. She was granted both her wishes. I wonder how many of us will be able to say that we received from our life everything we desired. I believe Lelia knew what you would get out of life exactly what you put into it. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap".

Looking closely at her children we can see a little of the qualities she possessed in each of them. Her compassion, humour, love of life and her deep and firm faith in God, are reflected in each of them. As s grandson, I fervently pray that some of her greatness will be passed on to the grandchildren and shall dwell in the family forever.

Although the family has lost its' head, we pray it has not lost its heart. For life is made in three parts, the body, the soul and the spirit. I think we realize that only the body is dead. The soul winged its way to Heaven early on Friday, February 7, 1964. Surely the spirit dwells among us and shall remain with us forever.

Perhaps if we have her simple faith in God, and her love of life, we shall attain a measure of love and esteem the world endowed on her.

For truly: -

"The Lord was her Shepard, She has not Want"

Grandson,
James Newton Rogers