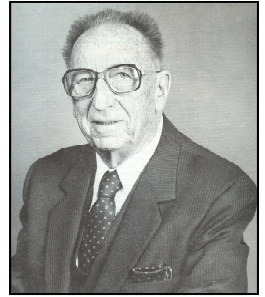


Exploits of the Rev. Garland G. Lacey

Born on Exploits Island 22 May 1903 - Died 11 September 1986 in Florida



The Rev. Garland G. Lacey, M.Div. - Farmer, Fisherman, Carpenter, Lumberwoods Cook, Store Clerk, Salesman, Minister

Born in 1903 to Delphine and Richard of Exploits, Newfoundland—the same year the Wright Brothers successfully flew their first flying machine.

Siblings - Blanche, William, Joyce, Effie

Age 10 - quit school and worked with merchant Ches Manuel curing and packaging fish in barrels - pay was 6 cents an hour for a 10 hour day.

Age 15 - went into the lumber woods to work as a cookee at logging camp near Badger.

Age 16 - family moved to Grand Falls, sister Effie worked in candy store and later as telephone operator in paper mill, sisters Joyce and Blanche became seamstresses in Horwoods, Joyce later married George Norman and Blanche became buyer for Riff's Ltd. Brother Bill continued school and later became foreman in paper mill.

Age 17 - went to work in the paper mill

Age 19 - while playing a guessing game at the Anglican Church Social Hall experienced a “strange sense of mission came over me, and I took it seriously” and decided to quit work and go back to school - shocking the principal Mr. Bellamy.

Age 20 - one of only two people who showed up to clear the brush and make ready for new church.

Age 22 - graduated from Grand Falls Academy, and appointed to his first charge in the United Church covering the White Bay charge - serving 12 churches from Pacquet to Jackson's Arm. He served two years on this pastoral ministry, married 18 couples, baptized 92 infants and conducted “unknown” number of revival meetings.

Age 24 - off to the University of Toronto to begin seminary training, struggled with Latin but got high marks in Hebrew and Greek. Became active in youth work, minister of a little church in Fisherville and for manual labour secured a job shoveling snow and scraping the ice on the college skating rink - pay was 69cents an hour.

Age 27 - toured the British Isles and Western Europe with a group of young people, and later, on his own, toured three countries bordering on the Mediterranean, including the Holy Lands.

May 1931- age 28 - received the Bachelor of Arts Degree from Victoria College in the University of Toronto. The United Church sent him to the far northwest territory of Saskatchewan for 22 months.

Age 30—enrolled in the Emmanuel Theological Seminary to pursue study toward a Master of Divinity degree. However, after one year took his credits and went to the Union Theological Seminar in New York City choosing as his thesis - “The Institutional Churches of New York City”.

1932 - Age 29- after attending a meeting on Broadway offered “his chivalrous services” to walk three ladies home, one was Frances Bieber of Butler, Pennsylvania

1934 - Age 31 - Received a Master of Divinity degree and became eligible to be officially ordained as a Gospel Minister but due to his absence from Canada was not on the list for church appointments, but took over the rural parish of North Bay, Ontario, for the annual salary of \$750

1935 - Frances Bieber, became Mrs. Garland Lacey in August, honeymooned for a week at Ocean City,

Maryland.

Moved to western New York State, near the city of Hornell, salary of \$100 per month. "One windy morning, shortly after we moved into the parsonage, we heard a faint knock on the door. A meek and shy little lady asked Frances if she had done the wash that morning. When Frances replied that she had, the visitor said "Well, then, I think it is YOUR sheets that are wrapped around the tombstone across the street!"

1938 - registered for a Doctorate of Education Degree at Columbia University

1940 - became pastor of First Presbyterian Church of New Hyde Park on Long Island, a position he held for the next six years. Requested that an additional room be added to the manse. "There was some reluctance until I announced that there would soon be an addition to the Lacey family."

1944, December 15 - "Our first and only child was born - Lowell Vincent Lacey."

Lowell made a career in the field of music, took piano lessons at age three and a half, pianist at various functions during his school days, church organist at age 13.

1946 - moved to Albany, NY, to take a position with the New York State Council of Churches, in charge of Inter-denominational Youth Programs and Christian Leadership Education.

1948 - received a call to be pastor of the Mount Washington Presbyterian Church in New York City where he worked tirelessly on major improvements in the church structure.

1952, November 11 - answered a call to establish a new church in Southern California with a considerable reduction in salary "but decided to make the venture in faith". Lowell, his son stood up in the pew and declared "I don't want to go to California!"

1952 - December 28, - there was to be an outdoor service on the site of the proposed New Presbyterian Church - it poured rain and the few brave souls who showed up took shelter in a nearby church of another denomination - Wilshire Presbyterian Church had its first service.

1953 - January 4 - "We held Sunday School in the bedroom of our new unfinished tract house, worship service in the living room and music was played on a pitch pipe" The Laceys stayed for thirteen and a half years.

1965 - after 40 years in the ministry, I retired from the ministry and studied to become a salesman for the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company - the experienced lasted only a few months, came out of retirement to take a position as assistant Dean of Students with Chapman College, Orange, California.

1966 - "one day two men called on us from the El Monte Presbyterian Church in the Pasadena area and invited me to become the Interim Minister of their church. That was the happiest day of my life and the beginning of another 20 years of activity in the ministry in churches in California, New York and Florida."

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1967 - Back to New York. Received a call from First Presbyterian Church of Northport on Long Island. "We paid \$1,000.00 for an ancient trailer. I had never pulled any kind of a trailer before and when I tried to get into the back yard of the manse for loading I smashed into the roof of the garage and had to saw off one of the rafters to get it clear".

1967 - The eight months at Northport were delightful. "I had an assistant and the members of the congregation were friendly, co-operative and gracious.

1967 - I went to the first Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn and commuted traveling by subway and walking along dangerous streets. The Brooklyn church was a landmark noted for its many original Tiffany stained glass windows. We stayed 18 months.

1969 - "In November I resigned my position with the Brooklyn church and we moved to Florida in search of a suitable place to retire. We found it in Pompano Beach, in the adult community of Leisureville, a brand new two bedroom, two bath, first-floor apartment with a 9 hole golf course at the back. Before we even settled in I received a phone call asking if I could supply the pulpit of the Cypress Presbyterian Church in Pompano Beach the very next morning since the scheduled preacher was taken ill. For the next seven month I was the Interim Minister there, later moving to the nearby Faith Reformed Church and then on to the Parkway Methodist Church.

1972 - "On January first I became the Minister of Visitation for First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale. I held this position for the next thirteen and a half years, making it the longest period in any one church during my 60 year ministry. Both Frances and I became very much involved in many phases of the church program."

1979 - "We escorted a tour of 26 persons from various parts of the United States and Canada to the countries of the South Pacific, Fiji, Tahiti, Australia and New Zealand. In December of that year we boarded the S.S. Fairwind for a tour of the Caribbean through the Panama Canal and on to Acapulco in Mexico".

We spent the greater part of the month of May in Greenwich, Connecticut, where our bachelor son, Lowell (1944-CA. 1980's), is the Choir Master and Organist of the Congregational Church, a position he has held for 11 years."

"In August we flew to Toronto and spent two and a half weeks in the apartment of a college friend. My sisters Joyce Norman from New Brunswick and Blanche Lacey from Newfoundland spent the time there with us."

Rev. Garland wrote a Christmas Greeting every year and the greeting was always: "Dear Friends Near and Far". These annual letters covered the events of the previous year and they described his yearly "Exploits" and travels. He kept in touch with family and friends visiting Canada and Newfoundland frequently, accompanied by his wife Frances. He also made regular visits to see his son in Greenwich, Connecticut, often at Christmas time or Thanksgiving.

In 1979 Frances was diagnosed with cancer and after many treatments her health declined and on August 2nd 1980 "her spirit translated into the triumphant Life Immortal - she lived a full life to the very end." On the next day, August 3rd, Garland was scheduled to preach at the First Presbyterian Church of Coral Gables some 135 miles from his residence. It being too late to find a substitute he "followed through and no one in the congregation was aware of my situation until at the close of the service. The good Lord was with me indeed and I felt His upholding and sustaining inner peace and power in a very special way." After a memorial service at the First Presbyterian Church of Ft. Lauderdale Frances was laid to rest in the Forest Lawn Cemetery near their Leisureville home in Pompano Beach, Florida.

They had planned to travel together to Nova Scotia to celebrate their 45 wedding anniversary. Garland made the trip, "as Frances would have wished", and spent some time in the Halifax area, visiting with his two sisters and nieces and families. Over the years Garland and his wife accompanied many groups to many countries, after the death of his wife he planned to visit more of the United States and Canada.

In 1981 he traveled to Toronto to celebrate with his graduation class of 50 years previous. While there he visited with relatives and friends including some who wintered in Fort Lauderdale. In June he flew to Newfoundland and on Sunday, June 14th preached in "my home Church, Memorial United, where I received my initial training for the ministry some 60 years before." His son Lowell came to join him and gave an organ recital at Cochrane Street United Church in St. John's and in Memorial United Church, Grand Falls. He also visited other Newfoundland communities in Notre Dame Bay and preached at Pacquet, the first time he returned since serving there in 1927. "It was such a joy to find that several of the church leaders there today are those that I baptized as infants over half a century ago."

Garland found time to continue his travels that year going to British Columbia in August 1981, visiting his son in New York in November, continuing on to Spain where he attended the Thanksgiving reunion of the Foundation for Christian Living which was instituted and presided over by Dr. and Mrs. Norman Peale with whom he was familiar having met in New York City in 1932.

In 1982 Garland celebrated his eleventh year on the staff of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, as Minister of Visitation, visiting homes and hospitals and conducting religious services in retirement homes and nursing institutions. For recreation and to "aid good health" he swam for about 30 minutes most days "at the time of the setting sun". He continued his travels completing a cruise of the Caribbean in January, visited son and Dr. Norman Vincent Peale in New England in May.

During his brief visits with his son, Lowell, he accompanied him on a very erratic schedule of giving organ recitals, attending midnight parties in homes of his musical friends, performing in orchestras on his violas, taking in operas and plays in New York city, and even served as a page turner when Lowell accompanied a professional singer at a New York studio. In November he went to Mexico city for a week attending the Annual Thanksgiving reunion arranged by the Foundation For Christian Living, under the leadership of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. This gathering was an annual event and Garland and his spouse went to a variety of these reunions in various places including Hawaii in 1983, and Bermuda in 1984.

In 1983 Garland became an Octogenarian - for the first time as he says. He attended the 30th anniversary of Wilshire Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana, California, the church he helped establish in 1953 and was recognized by having the Christian Education center named "Lacey Hall" in his honour. He also renewed acquaintances with Robert Schuller and attended worship at the Crystal Cathedral. He continued his travels, cruising on the Mediterranean and meeting his sisters Blanch and Joyce in Toronto.

By 1984 Garland was on contract three days a week to the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, however he served many extra days and calls. This being his 50th anniversary of his ordination he attended a reunion in New York Seminary from whence he graduated. He received congratulatory letters from Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller. Again on the move he went on another cruise in May. In July joined his sisters in Montreal for a family reunion

Garland retired again in 1985 completing 60 years of ministry. He returned to Newfoundland for the last time in August visiting family, brother Bill and sister Blanche. It was also a significant year in that he remarried. On October 25th he married Ruth Morris, a widow who lived in Tallahassee, Florida. Ruth was an educator by profession and her dentist husband died in 1981. They were married in New York city with Lowell being best man and giving an organ recital. They first met on a cruise ship in Hawaii on December 2, 1983.

They had plans to keep on traveling and as Ruth writes "It's off to California for Easter and on to Atlanta. Then Toronto in June, Newfoundland in July and the World's Fair in Vancouver in September. Who knows what's next? They made a trip to Newfoundland and were chauffeured around by Blanch to St. John's, Grand Falls, Corner Brook.

However, their time together was all too short, with Ruth visiting her home in Tallahassee and Garland at home in Pompano Beach both preparing for their next trip, Garland collapsed and died suddenly in his apartment on September 11, 1986. His son, Lowell, learned of his father's passing from an emergency attendant who was in the apartment when Lowell phoned his father. Lowell died in his 40's a few years after his father.

Garland's life was one of service, travel and interesting experiences. His friend Jeannie of Stanford wrote him to say that after reading his 1981 news letter telling of his travels and visitations during that year she was so exhausted she had to lie down and take a rest!

In February 2007 this writer visited the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale to find that Garland is still remembered. I spoke to his colleague Dr. Neuman who stated he remembers Garland for his great outgoing personality, his broad smile and his humour, especially his Newfoundland stories. For years Garland wrote a Christmas message to friends, family and colleagues. His concluding statement on his last message is as follows, it truly states what Garland believed and how he lived: **"Live for today, dream of tomorrow, learn from yesterday"**

*Written by Jim Dobson from the memories of Rev. G. G. Lacey
and interviews with sister Blanche Lacey who is now 100.*