

Mrs. Lackey Was Victorious In Winning Souls, But Lost The Battle With Cancer

By LOUISE NORMAN
News Staff Writer

Mrs. Jewel Lackey, who successfully survived five cancer operations during the last 20 years, lost a final battle with the disease shortly after noon Monday.

Most residents of the Mount Airy area knew the white-haired lady on sight, but few knew that she turned down a professional baseball career or how she came to be a preacher's wife.

The wife of Dr. Carl Lackey, pastor of White Plains Baptist Church, had been a pastor's wife at one location probably longer than any other preacher's wife in Surry County. The couple observed their 40th year of service at White Plains in March.

During her youth, the former Jewel Thomas of High Point had a tough decision to make. She would either take the offer by a professional baseball scout from Kalamazoo, Mich., to become a pitcher, or she would obey her mother.

"I started playing ball with my brothers and sisters when I was young," Mrs. Lackey said in a recent interview before her death. "I played ball all through high school and my young adult years."

She was in high demand at all the mills in High Point to play on their teams, noted her husband. "She could pitch better than most men could."

Before her marriage, when the baseball scout asked her to try a professional pitching career for "just two years," she opted to take the advice of her mother instead.

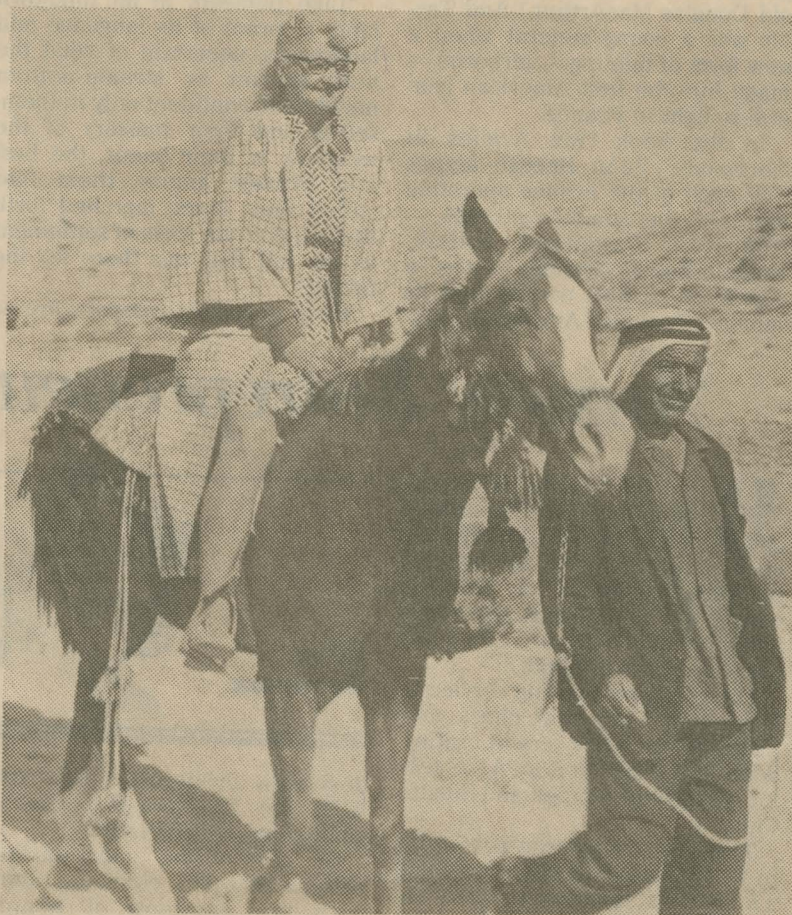
"Mama said, 'You'll not learn the greatest experiences in life by playing ball; you need to learn the love of God. You'll learn that from others' experiences.' She said if I was first submissive to her, then I would learn to be submissive to the Lord. If I hadn't been submissive to her, I might have gone away and got into trouble," said Mrs. Lackey.

She pointed out that just one wrong decision during a person's youth, like marrying the wrong person or choosing the wrong career, can keep one off the right course for the rest of his life.

Mrs. Lackey, who has knocked on literally thousands of doors



Mrs. Jewel Lackey



Mrs. Lackey enjoys a horse ride during a visit to the Holy Land.

in the Mount Airy area to ask people to come to church, joked, "I run them in (get them to church), and he runs them out," referring to her husband's hard-hitting, old-fashioned brand of preaching that many people don't want to hear in these "modern days."

During periods of sickness over the past few years, she often prayed for lost souls to come to her, and many have. She said the hardest burden of a soul-winner is to witness to people who reject God. She named several persons she has witnessed to over the years and was still praying for just before her death.

Crippled Man Led Lackeys To Church

Mrs. Lackey said her husband wasn't a "doctor" when the young couple started going together; he says he "wasn't even a nurse." Neither of them, in fact, were saved then. The soon-to-be preacher operated a pool hall in High Point, and the future lady of the manse worked at a factory.

That was all to change, however, and some time after they were married, a crippled man who Lackey "took a liking to" came into the small grocery store he operated at the time. The man pleaded with Lackey to go with him to church.

Lackey finally gave in and went to the first service where he had ever heard the gospel presented. The couple were then in their 20s and had been married about two years.

"I knew a bargain when I heard it," said Lackey, "and I went down to the altar and got saved. If I could trade all of my sin and get Heaven instead, I wanted it."

While her husband was still in prayer at the altar, Mrs. Lackey slipped down on her knees

beside him. When he looked up and saw her, he asked, "What are you doing down here?"

"I'm doing the same thing you are — getting saved!" answered his wife.

Mrs. Lackey also remembered having her most embarrassing moment happen that night.

"We went out right after we were saved. I had to go to the 'bathroom.' I didn't know people were around, and went to the bathroom outside. I covered my head until I could leave, after I knew people had seen me," she chuckled.

Her husband was called to preach shortly afterward, which automatically made her a preacher's wife, a role that was often difficult, but which also brought much joy.

The Lackeys served at a church in Archdale, which they helped found, for several years before coming to the old church building at White Plains, made famous by the Siamese Twins, Eng and Chang Bunker. The Bunkers helped build the church and are buried in the cemetery there.

Although the Bunkers had died before the Lackeys came to the church, Mrs. Lackey recalled that some of the twins' descendants have visited both the old and new church buildings over the years.

The old building was constructed in 1856, and the new structure was built a century later in 1956.

Anyone who knew Mrs. Lackey will quickly tell you her main goal was winning souls. When asked how many people she had led to the Lord over the years, she said she didn't know, but admitted that the number was high.

"I'm afraid to guess," added the pastor's wife, who spent her last days in a hospital bed at home. "I might miss one, and every one of them is important."

She said that "everyone that I really had a burden for, God let me witness to."

What is the hardest thing about being a pastor's wife? "Being submissive to my husband and being willing for the Lord to use me in the preacher's life," Mrs. Lackey answered, adding that the hardest thing about being a Christian is to be submissive to the Lord. She said the most important things a Christian can do are to pray and be a soul-winner.

Though being submissive was sometimes hard for her, she said submissiveness had also brought her the most joy, which began "when I learned to say, 'Lord, here I am. Use me as YOU see fit.'"

What advice would she give a young couple just starting out? "Depend on the Lord and prayer. Don't make your own decisions; don't make your mate's decisions, but depend on the Lord's answers."

Mrs. Lackey said if she had life to live over, she would have made only one major change: "I wish I had been saved earlier. My mother just didn't know how to tell me, although I wanted to be at an early age."

Perhaps this is one of the reasons Mrs. Lackey and her husband, childless themselves, have had a great burden for the spiritual lives of the children in Surry County.

"Sometimes I think that if I'd had children, I wouldn't have thought as much of 'our children,'" reflected Mrs. Lackey, referring to the children who go to the church's school and attend Sunday morning services on church buses.

She admitted that all have not accepted Christ or lived for Him, and that she grieved deeply over those who were reared to go to church, but chose to take another path after they grew up.

Dr. Lackey has said he wants every child within the reach of the church to have at least one opportunity to hear the gospel message. He said just hours before his wife's death that he will "keep on preaching the gospel and trying to win souls. God has given us a full life and many souls for our labor. I can't complain."

Mrs. Lackey, who would have been 72 on Nov. 2, said in last week's interview that she thanked the Lord "for every person in our church. There's some really dear people up there."

"Up there" is the church just a couple of hundred feet from the parsonage. Mrs. Lackey, who had been unable to attend church since Christmas, listened to the services piped into the parsonage via intercom.

When asked what a Christian should do when he is really having a hard battle to face, such as death by cancer, she replied without hesitation, "Pray, and then put it in the hands of the Lord!"

The Lackeys celebrated their golden wedding anniversary last Aug. 1.

Editor's Note: Full details on survivors and funeral arrangements for Mrs. Lackey, who will be buried Wednesday, are elsewhere in today's News.

MT. AIRY "NEWS" Mt. Airy, NC

Tuesday, May 5, 1987

Area Deaths & Funerals

died Monday afternoon at her home. She was the wife of Dr. Carl T. Lackey, pastor of White Plains Baptist Church.

Born Nov. 2, 1915 in High Point, she was the daughter of John and Mary Jane Grayson Thomas and a member of White Plains Baptist Church.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday in White Plains Baptist Church, conducted by the Rev. Sonny Tolbert, Dr. Don Green and the Rev. Tim Green. Burial will be in the church cemetery, with graveside services conducted by Dr. Jack Wood and the Rev. Roger Williams.

Surviving are her husband; one sister, Mrs. Ella Veight Nance of High Point; and one brother, Woodrow Thomas of High Point.

The body will remain at Moody Funeral Home until taken to the church to lie in state one hour prior to the services. The family will be at the funeral home tonight from 7 until 9 o'clock.

LACKEY

WHITE PLAINS—Mrs. Jewel Thomas Lackey, 71, of White Plains,

Wilkes Bk 6 pg 341

Thomas Mahaffey
+ wife Patsey

have include ch/o

Cynthia Longbottom (deed)

Wilkes Co.

Richard Baugher & Elisabeth Larky 29 Mch
Nelson Hagins (bn) 1835

Head Larky & Elizabeth Brooker 28 Oct 1839
Willis Holloway bn

James Leakey [Loka] 13 Aug 1804 (M.B.) Mary Head

29 Dec 1842 Wilkes Co., NC

Ch.

2 & Henry

1. ~~Lech~~
not in
will

~~24 May 1825 (M.B.)~~

~~James Longbottom~~

3. Head

28 Oct 1839 (M.B.) Elizabeth Brooker

4. Sally
1808

Henry Colvard

5. Elizabeth ^{Betty} 29 Mar 1835 (M.B.) Richard Bangs

by 1842

6. 'Polly'

Combs