Alice Louise Langstaff

JULY 5, 2022



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June 16, 1926 - July 5, 2022

It is with great sadness that we announce Alice Langstaff (McGill) passed away Tuesday, July 5, 2022 at the age of 96.

Alice was born in Coronation, Ab on June 16, 1926 to John and Emily (Wallis) McGill.

Alice is predeceased by her husband Roger B. Langstaff, her brother John (Red) McGill, her sister-in-law Kay McGill, nephew Danny McGill and also a stepbrother and stepsister.

At the age of 14, on August 15, 1941 as a symbol of their dedication to their God Jehovah, Alice along with her brother, mother and father, were baptized in the Wolf Creek that ran past their property.
Alice and her family were faithful witnesses of Jehovah God until their passing away.

Alice spent her early years living on a farm in Veteran, Ab before the family moved to the Alder Flats, Ab area in approximately 1933.

The following is part of a write up by Alice from a book called: Packhorse to Pavement

'My parents, Emily and John McGill; my brother John and I, Alice, left Veteran, Alberta and moved to Minnehik in 1933 or '34. We then moved on to the flats, now known as McGill Flats. We started with nothing and had been hailed out for seven years in a row at Veteran. Dad built a shack from logs standing upright. It was our home, leaking roof and all until we got a better one. When we moved from Veteran there were hardships. We had no money and had to sleep in a boxcar with our cattle, horses and chickens. We cooked our meals, mainly eggs, over a campfire. This was hard on my mother as she had been raised in a city and had come from England.

We did go to school, the Maywood School for a short time before we moved to the flats. Dad thought we needed a bit more school, so we moved back to Alder Flats for a few months in the winter. Our teacher was Mr. Sheridian and we sure liked him for he was good to us. We moved back to the flats in the spring of 1938 and made a living on the raw land. We never went hungry with the wild meat, berries and our eggs. John and I had to work very hard because Dad wasn't very well. Now we can say that the hard work was very good for us. We cleared most of the land by hand and with horses. Because we lived on the flat, we had to put a road in down a steep hill. John and myself, with a team of horses and a sloop would haul and cut away the bank. Although the Wolf Creek was just a creek, at times it would overflow the banks and at one time we had to leave our home. We lived in a make-shift shelter for about three weeks, until the creek receded again. We rescued the chickens from a little island on horseback.'

Alice kept a diary and so throughout this obituary there will be just a few snippets of her life stories.

Her diary entries are typed exactly how mom wrote it.

Her spelling is amazing considering she only had approximately 3 or 4 years of elementary schooling.

4 diary entries:

May 18, 1941 - My bro John shot a bear with a 22, rifle, he was just 13 years old. The bear was 7'4" by 6'10"

June 24, 194 - Our old red cow lost her bell to-day so ma and I hunted till we found it + boy was we glad.

July 3, 1941 - John and I peel eighty rails and Dad cut enough post to cover a hundred and ten rails.

July 22, 1941 - We pick a hundred pound of ruhbarbra, Dad + John soled it a the camp and got five dollors.

On October 16, 1946 Alice and Roger Langstaff were married in Jasper, Ab. Their 64 years together started in an area called Baker Creek. Rod and his brother Ward built a cabin. Alice tells how the floor was made out of green lumber and when it dried the boards shrunk and big cracks were left between the boards. A number of forks and knives that got dropped ended up falling down between the boards and were gone forever. Alice enjoyed knitting so in order to not lose her knitting needles she had to sit either in the middle of the table or their bed. The bed was made from poles covered with spruce boughs (branches) and the sheets were two green woolen Hudson Bay blankets. Alice would take these blankets and trample them in the snow, pin them to a clothesline and then take a broom to them to beat the snow out of them. This is how they got washed.

After Baker Creek they moved to Valemount, BC, then Solsqua, BC and finally settling in Sicamous, BC for 30 years. Sundre, Ab was home for the next 30 years, then Calgary, Ab for a couple of years. At the ages of 82 (Alice) and 92 (Rod) they moved to beautiful Creston, BC where they thoroughly enjoyed a number of years

on a small acreage with many different fruit trees and a large garden spot. At the age of 95 Alice came back to Alberta with Rhonda and Dean to live in Innisfail, Ab.

Highlights of Alice's life were the many Conventions and International Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses that she attended. One of her favorite stories was the train trip she took to Cleveland, Ohio in the summer of 1946. She slept in a box car and ate bologna sandwiches along the way. She knew exactly how much money she could spend per day in order to get back home.

In 1958 another adventure began. By this time Alice is now married and has two girls ages 2 and 9.
On July 4, 1958 they left Sicamous, BC. and headed to New York for another International Convention. By truck and a homemade camper they made their way east across Canada down into the US to New York, averaging around 260 miles of travel per day. Attended the convention (July 7-Aug 4) then drove back west across the US and arrived back in Sicamous on August 23rd 1958. A good friend Henry McDonald traveled with them and also helped with the driving. There were many exciting days during this almost 2 month trip, to many to relate but here are a few diary entries:

July 16 - We stop in Toronto to visit Leslie. the traffic was sure thick. seen the niagara falls and U.S.A. side to. Rod nearly knock over a toll station into the falls. Stopped where police told us to move on.

July 17 - We travel the thruway to N.Y for ..??.. had to move before breakfast, Henry never slept to good there was drunks around in the night also the police but he let us stay till morning.

July 30 - There was program all day. There was 7 thousand,136 imersed to-day. attenits 150,282.
(I believe the words here should be: immersed and attendance)

August 3 - To-day was a full day at Yankee Stadium. There was a couple fires near the stadium. main talk attenits 253,926

…on their way back home now…

August 5 - We slept in a corn field last night travel 221 miles to-today. We are also sleeping a corn field to night. But not so fortunate farmer man came and ask what where we doing.

August 23 - We slept at near Kelowna and then got some fruit and stop at Tonys has a swim then got home at 5 P.M. and couldn’t find our keys for the house. The trip return to N.Y is ….
(I believe mom forgot the word 'done', because the next day's entry she's canning the fruit they bought in Kelowna - I'm sure she was exhausted!!)

Mom was always proud to say that they never ate out in a restaurant, not even once during this trip!!

Alice always had something on the go. Gardening, baking, canning, jamming or sewing and knitting were daily activities.
Alice gave and gave of herself and was always willing to share what she had. Most, if not all, who knew Alice received homemade bread or buns, a pie, produce from the garden, slippers or mittens and a wheatie bag. She loved and cared about everyone she knew.

Alice will be lovingly remembered by her 2 daughters, Belva and husband Jeremy Lang, Rhonda and husband Dean Backous, six grandchildren and their mates, seven great grandchildren and one great great grandson. Also a niece Kathie and husband John Danchak and a great nephew and great niece. And of course, ALL the rest of her relatives and her friends that she has made over the course of her lifetime.

Dear mom, momsy, momma, granny, grandma, grammy, great grandma and great great grandma and auntie: You will be in our hearts every day until we see you again, very soon - in the earthly Paradise.

The following promises found in God's Word the Bible were dear to Alice's heart, and we look forward to them becoming a reality in the near future.

Psalm 37:10,11 "*Just a little while longer, and the wicked will be no more, You will look at where they were, And they will not be there. But the meek will possess the earth, And they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.*"

Isaiah 33:24 "*And no resident will say: "I am sick.*"

Isaiah 65:21,22 "*They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage…And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.*"

We would like to thank Dr. Jansen and all the staff at the Red Deer Hospice for their gentle, kind, loving and compassionate care for our dear sweet momma.

A Memorial Service will be held via Zoom at a later date.

The poem that follows is written by one of Alice's granddaughters and perfectly sums up the Alice we all knew and loved.
Please enjoy our memories with us.

Behind the Name

Alice is a name that I've heard throughout my life...
A name that carries weight and memories I hold dear...

She’s been a wife, a mother, an auntie to those who are blood and perhaps to those who are not…
A grandmother into her greats with many whose actions do mirror…
Adversity from youth on, her will to survive is an inner strength, one to be a reckoned with…
Hard work was her life, one of schedule, determination, and spiritual education….
To catch a glimpse as a child, so often I’d see…a sip of morning coffee, text and the bible to read….
She shared many things to help us all grow, with baked goods, yummy treats that continued to flow…
Don’t forget those cookies nestled in an ice cream pail n frozen down below…
The smell of fresh baked pie or cinnamon buns, oh how delightful to our senses you know…
A crafter by nature, a stitch here a stitch there, whether by machine or by needles there was always something to sell or share…
Gifts of homemade sweaters, slippers n mittens full of candy to our delight…
Spending summers in the yard, raking leaves, gathering vegetables, n picking berries…
To watching her work n toil…was quite a sight.
We helped where we could with the cleaning and gleaning, with pails of peas to shell, Oh my…
But to our delight a rest on the deck for our efforts, as the sun did shine…
We were surrounded by potted flowers and butterflies…
With smile, a well done and orange float in hand…
It was not the end of it, for this hard working soul, as there was canning to be done, as well as jam to make, so nothing would spoil…
Yummy family dinners with the table stretched as far as it could go filled with fresh food, n with the chatter of creative conversation…

Many laughs and giggles would fill the room...
Perhaps a hidden recorder too...
A hint of burning wood lingers in the air, over a study space, a sewing station and a warm room...

With cousins sitting close actually side by side...
We reminisce upon many picture albums and the thoughts of days gone by...
Board games, card games and dolls with little red carriages, n handmade clothes...
Many spare beds prepared with a stuffed bear or perhaps two...
Thrift store finds could be many or could be few; discoveries were always there for me and you...
With a plan in motion, the camper n truck be seen, packed to the brim, not an item missing, no not one at all...
With frozen water jars in odd shapes for everyone, we'd be ready for the adventure and off we would all go...
A wealth of information and remedies of all kinds when cupboard doors open you would run and perhaps hide...
She spared no words that needed to be said but the weight they carried went straight to our head...
Whether we gathered with many family members or just a few...
We enjoyed every moment to be there with you...
Memories maybe all we can carry, in this world that we know,
Perhaps those treasures are what makes us whole, or who we ought to be n eventually know...
What I do know to be true, something and I will always try to remember...
is that the person behind this name ...
The Alice I know...
is one of the GREATS anyone could ever know!

This is a dedication to Gramma Alice from all those who have shared these experiences and felt your love…
from daughters, to aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren, who all hold these precious moments, as of value, and will love you forever for them!

Love you Grammie!
Ps: Just want you to know how very special you are!

Creative writing by:
your granddaughter Tonia

Messages of Condolence

My dear Aunty Alice, I am so sorry I didn't get to see you before you left us. Like a brother said " some have to take the underground railway other take the over pass". Jehovah will remember you faithful work and your great kindness. May the rest of your family have peace and happiness. Jehovah, bless all of you.

— RON/LORNA WILLIAMS