

My career:

My first teaching assignment was at Stanhope and I employed the methods I learned in teacher training. My pupils did very well. *(My mother and cousins, Janet and Helen, tell the story of a visit they made to PEI in the 1990s, at least 60 years after my mother was a teacher on the Island. They went with my Uncle John took the three of them to Green Park. A car parked near them and when the driver got out of his car, he asked John, "What is your name?" John replied, "Yeo". The man said, "Yeo? Do you Beatrice Yeo?" John said, "Yes, she is sitting in the car." When Tom and I first visited PEI in the late 1990s we attended services at St. James Anglican Church. We were asked to introduce ourselves and I announced that I was Beatrice Yeo's daughter. The gasp from the congregation was audible. A man behind me said, "Your mother was my first teacher.")*

My next schools were Margate, Bideford and Northam. *(on the visit with John mentioned above, John invited Earle Dymont to see us. He stood in front of my mother and said "Do you remember me?" Mother had been his teacher at least 60 years earlier and, of course, he had changed a lot over those years! On another visit, this time with Tom and me, we took her to see Polly Linkletter Millar. My mother, by this time quite bent over from osteoporosis, was greeted by Polly, also quite bent over from the same condition. My mother, using her best school teacher voice said, "Polly, what's the matter with your back?" as if Polly were a wayward student slouching in the back of the class. My mother later told me that Polly had been the prettiest pupil she'd ever had).*

In 1937 I entered the Prince County Hospital for Nurses Training, where I spent three years and graduated a registered nurse. I went to Montreal, where my sisters Adele, Nora and Isabelle had gone a few years before. I took a three month course in orthopedics at the Shriners' Hospital. The children came from impoverished areas of Quebec. It was amazing to see the change in them after they were bathed and dressed in clean clothing.

I heard of an opening for nurses at the Tuberculosis Hospital at St. Agathe, eighty miles from Montreal. This was a ski resort in the mountains. As soon as I went into the dining room, I heard the other nurses asking, "Do you ski?" That afternoon they took me to a ski shop and got me fitted out with skis and ski clothing. A group of us nurses took lessons from a ski instructor and we skied all winter.



A photo of my mother when she was at the Shriners' Hospital

At that time, the only treatment for tuberculosis was rest and good food. The patients were covered with warm blankets and put out on the veranda in the winter time for a couple of hours.

In September (*probably 1938*) I returned to Montreal and found an opening in a small, general hospital in Douval, a suburb of Montreal.

My brother Cedric and his wife had twin daughters. Cedric and his wife invited me to come to Charleston, South Carolina in March of the next year. I took a plane to Charleston, my first plane trip.

I found work in a general hospital in Charleston. Later, I met nurses from Atlanta and they told me to apply at a hospital in Atlanta, which I did and was accepted. While in Atlanta I met a nurse who had returned from New York Post-Graduate Hospital. She told me about the research that was being done in surgical procedures. I found that very interesting, so I applied and was accepted. Then I enrolled, I asked the supervisor if I could take the course in operating room management, which was for six months. When I completed the course, I got work in a small hospital on Greene Avenue in Brooklyn.

WWII was raging at this time, and I decided to enlist in the Army Nurse Corp, but I needed New York Nurse's Registration. I needed to take several courses in order to qualify. I enlisted as an Army Nurse on April 15, 1945, and was sent to Austin, Texas for Basic Training and then to Camp Robinson, near Little Rock, Arkansas.

While I was there, the war ended in Far East and we were told we could leave.



My mother in uniform

I left Little Rock and flew to Chicago, then on to Montreal to visit my sisters, I boarded the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver, where my half-sister Blanche and her husband lived. I then went to Seattle.

My marriages:

In Seattle I met James LaTour. We were married and our daughter was born. We bought a house in Tacoma.

My husband James was an engineer for the Northern Pacific Railway. He worked long hours and decided to leave the railway. We were not getting along, so he went to San Francisco. I didn't hear from him for over three years, so I filed for divorce on the grounds of desertion. *(I remember so well my mother telling me one day that she had divorced my father. I had only vague memories of him, but I do remember asking if this meant that he was no longer my daddy. I don't remember her response. At any rate, I only saw my father once after this, when I was 11 or 12, so I have very vague memories of him. Tom found out in 1998, by doing some research on the Internet, that my father had died in 1978).*



This is the only photograph that I have of my father, James LaTour – I think he was a very handsome man. My mother would have been about 41 years old in this photo.

I worked at the Indian Hospital in Tacoma and was introduced to Roy Melvin, a bachelor who loved children. We were married and I sold my home in Tacoma and bought a home for retarded children in Spanaway. Eventually our business was shut down by the state. *(My mother never told me what happened, but I think that they were reported to the state or county. Roy had a frightful temper and would beat the children. My suspicion has been that this is what caused the business to fail, but I have no proof).*

My mother's notes don't mention that she and Roy adopted my brother Terry – I think it must have been about 1959 or 60. I am so glad they did so, because Terry was very good to our mother, particularly in her later years when she became very forgetful and, later still, suffered from dementia.

*Several years ago there was a book published "Westcountrymen in Prince Edward Island." This caused my mother and her sisters a lot of angst, because the author characterized my mother's grandfather as a Robber Baron. I never understood exactly why they were so angry about the book, which became known in the family as *That Book*. However, I did have a hint at one point when my mother told me that her younger sisters*

had no idea how influential and wealthy the Yeos were – by the time they came along, the shipyard was gone and the family lived very modestly.