



Bertha Mae Wallace Johnson Pease Grammie Pease

By Bertha Washburn Fitzgerald

Grammie Pease was my mother's mother. I never saw my Grammie stand or walk. I only saw her in a wheel chair. She had arthritis that affected both of her knees and her hands were also affected by the illness. She depended upon my mother to bathe her, put her into bed, get her up, dress her, and provide her other personal needs. In spite of her handicap, she was the most cheerful, humorous, patient grammie in the whole world.

Grammie spent many summers in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine with our family, Mom, Dad, Charlotte, Frank, Robert, Metella, Bertha, Mabel, Jane, and Carolyn. My brother Dick wasn't born until many years after Grammie died. In the winter, Grammie went to live with Uncle Fred who lived in Jackson, Maine. Uncle Fred and Aunt Susie also had a large family.

Grammie's wheel chair was made of oak wood with a high back and seat woven with cane. One of the two arms could be lifted out of a slot and dropped down to enable Grammie, with Mom's help, to slide out of the chair into the bed. The chair had a very large wheel on each side and a small wheel in the rear that swiveled.

Grammie had short, silky, soft gray hair. Most of us are able to comb or brush our hair whenever we feel like it. We scratch our heads without ever thinking about it. But Grammie was not able to do such common things. Brushing Grammie's hair became a fun thing for us. We dropped one arm of the chair, climbed up behind Grammie and brushed her hair while she gave us a ride around the house.

I have fond memories of Grammie in the kitchen. The kitchen table was very large to accommodate our large family. Grammie wheeled up to the opposite end of the table from where I sat. Mom and Dad sat across from each other in the center part of table. My brothers and sisters filled in the spaces in between. Grammie could manage to feed herself in spite of her crippled hands. At the end of the main course, Dad always wanted something for dessert. Instead of asking Mom to bring out some hidden cake or cookies, Dad would suggest that perhaps Grammie would like some. That put a smile on the faces of the children because Mom couldn't refuse. That always made Mom and Grammie chuckle. The older girls had the job of setting the table and washing, drying, and putting the dishes away in the cupboard. When Grammie was there she was able to dry the dishes and stack them on the counter, ready for someone to put them in the cupboard. It made her happy to be able to help.

We often made Grammie laugh when one of us would ask, "Do you know Grammie Pease? That last word is spelled 'P-e-a-s-e'". However, the child hearing the question, pretended the question was, "Do you know Grammie p-e-e-s?" Grammie would ask, "Doesn't everyone?" Without fail, we all laughed no matter how many times it was said.

Grammie was an expert seamstress and taught my mother the art of sewing. Grammie was able to use the electric sewing machine and enjoyed helping Mom with mounds of garments to be made or mended.

I have three things that belonged to my Grammie. I have her Bible that was given to her from her mother. It is medium sized with a brown leather cover. I have her doll that she earned picking potatoes. The doll has a soft body that resembles a young woman. Her face is pure white china with painted black hair. Her hands are also china. She is dressed in a black dress, trimmed with lace, pantalets under her dress, and black stockings. The third gift, I received from my mother, who gave me Grammie's first name. I am proud to have her name.

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