

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nwa/leaming/dessie.html>

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nwa/heroine.html>

Dessie Elizabeth Hayter, daughter of Oren & Orpha (Brashers) Hayter, married George Monroe Leaming on September 16, 1934. George was a great, great grandson of Judah Leaming and Thankful Tuttle. This article by Carrie Taylor describes an heroic event in Dessie's life.

A flash from the past? One could hardly think so listening to Dessie Leaming recount her tale fifty-four years ago (1933). Pride fills her voice as her razor-sharp memory engages and she relays details of the experience as if it were yesterday.

I'm sure there are many Lockwood citizens who remember this amazing event, but for the some of those who have been here less than fifty years, read onÑthe tale of a true heroine.

Dessie was your average 28 year old bookkeeper, who, on this particular day in April, was walking with her five year old niece to the train depot to mail a letter. What began as a beautiful spring day was destined to end in tragedy. As Dessie and her niece made their way toward their destination, the child took a notion to run ahead and pick some pansies. Dessie was busy at the depot window when she heard the train whistle. Her sixth sense beckoned her to turn from the window; as she did, she saw her niece on the tracks in the path on the oncoming train.

Instinct and adrenaline guided Dessie from that moment on. She jumped from the platform and got to her niece just in time to push her free from the train's path. The child was safe. Dessie, however, was not as fortunate. Her right foot was caught under the wheel of the train and she was dragged along the tracks for about 60 yards. Her toes and most of her foot were crushed, her wrist was smashed, several bones broken, severe scalp lacerations sustained and her shoulder was badly damaged. As she lay beside the tracks, bewildered and barely conscious, she remembers the porter from the train looking over her and saying, "I thought you'd be dead."

Dessie was rushed to a Springfield hospital where Dr. Pinkston and Dr. Hovebone tended to her injuries, and eventually, performed a partial amputation of her right leg. Five weeks and five days later, Dessie returned to her home where her fiance, George Leaming, was waiting to wed this courageous young woman, and they did immediately following her discharge from the hospital.

News of such a valiant rescue travels fast. The limelight was Dessie's for the next few months. Calls from lawyers and reporters were abundant; but the call Dessie least expected came from a representative of the Carnegie Foundation in Philadelphia. The agent was from a special department of the Foundation called the Carnegie Hero Commission. Several agents from the Commission came to Lockwood and interviewed Dessie, her family and several townspeople.

Following the investigation, Dessie Leaming was awarded the "Carnegie Bronze Medal" to honor this extraordinary act of bravery. She also received a \$500.00 cash award, which was specifically limited for personal use. Dessie used the money to help make the down-payment on her home. The medal occupies a dresser drawer at home and serves to commemorate the "awful and wonderful" day in Dessie Leaming's life.

Thank you, Dessie, for an inspiring piece of history made by a remarkable woman.

obit:

**LEAMING, Dessie Elizabeth Hayter**

**Dessie Leaming** found 1 result. . .

Obituaries

**Dessie Elizabeth Leaming**

A centurion, **Dessie Leaming** has completed her journey which began on March 12, 1906, near Walnut Grove, Mo., where she was born to James Oren Hayter and Orpha (Brashers) Hayter in their home.

We trust she is now reunited with many friends and family members including her parents; her sisters, Tennie Harman and Nellie Bird; her brothers, James Jack Menan and Raymond Buster Loren Hayter; her husband, George Monroe Leaming; her daughter, Carolyn Dawn Drury; her daughter-in-law, Cheryl Lynn (Clark) Leaming; and her grandson, Brett Christopher Leaming.

Dessie left behind numerous friends and family members including her younger brother, Albert Oren Hayter and Bonnie; her sister-in-law, Nema Hayter; her son, George Denton Leaming and Diane; her son-in-law, Ray Drury Jr. and Elizabeth; her grandchildren, Ray Drury III and Rita, Jeff Drury and Jill, Celena Smith and Doug, Chad Leaming and Jason Raynor and Debra; six great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

Dessie attended Draughons Business College in Springfield after graduating from Walnut Grove High School in 1925. She was employed by the Farmers Exchange in Lockwood, Mo., and spent most of her life in Lockwood.

Dessie and George were married on Sept. 16, 1934, about six months after she was seriously injured in a train accident on the main street of Lockwood. The accident resulted in the loss of her right leg but she saved the life of her niece, Jonell Harman, and was awarded the Andrew Carnegie Foundation Hero Medal and a \$500 cash award. Jonell is one of Dessie's many nieces, nephews and cousins who have been close to her no matter where they live. Dessie and George purchased a business in Lockwood and created Leaming Motor Service in 1940, which they owned and operated until selling it in 1974.

Socially active, Dessie was a charter member of the Marthas (a prominent local bridge club) and the Lockwood Business and Professional Women Chapter, selected as the woman of the year in 1964, by the BPW. She was ordained an elder in the Lockwood Presbyterian Church and held a position on the Older Adults Transportation System Board. Until recently, it was her habit to ride the OATS bus to Greenfield on Thursday for dinner at the Senior Citizens Center followed by games and shopping. Every day was Independence Day with Dessie as she strived for as much independence as life would allow. Her many good friends and relatives helped her immeasurably in this endeavor.

Her daughter-in-law, Diane Leaming, tended to her faithfully since October and Dessie chose to become a resident at the Good Shepherd Nursing Home in December, where she spent her final days. Two days before her death, she repeated the 23rd Psalm and sang Jesus Loves Me. Diane and George Denton were at her side when she breathed her last.

Services will be held 2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26, in Lockwood United Methodist Church with Dr. Troy Morgan officiating. Burial will follow in **Dudenville Cemetery**. The family will receive friends Thursday evening from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. in the funeral chapel.

Memorial contributions, in lieu of flowers, may be made to the St. Judes Childrens Hospital, the Lockwood Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Churches, the Good Shepherd Nursing Home, the Dade County Senior Citizens Center, the Older Adults Transportation System or any other beneficial organization.

Services are under the care of Lockwood Funeral Chapel.  
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