

History of Lillian Sidor (nee Labatiuk)

Sit down to read a story about a gal named Lil.
Call her Kalena or Lily, she'll answer you still.

Lillian (Kalena) Labatiuk was born on November 14, 1933 at the Spring Creek home of her parents George and Maria Labatiuk. Lillian was the sixth of eight children.



**Gido and Baba Labatiuk, Mom and Dad;
Middle: Rose, Joyce, Nick, Bill.
Front: baby Lillian and Sylvester**

One of her earliest memories was starting school in Norma and staying with Baba and Gido so she could walk to school. She has many memories of those times and remembers more about grade one than any of the following grades.

She learned quickly that in order to get to school on time, she had to get on the road early as Mrs. Basaraba would be driving by to take cream to town with her white horse and buggy.

Other memories of these times:

- ❖ "Baba used to do my hair up in rags so I could have curls for school."
- ❖ "I had many night-overs with Olga Onischuk at Baba's."
- ❖ Dad dropping by daily and giving Gido and Baba an update on what was going on in the war.

- ❖ The Christmas concert with the girls dressed in little white dresses. It was beautiful. "I must have had one too, but I don't remember."
- ❖ The worst thing was wearing big boots to school '*Russianih*' – boots with felt liners. To this day, she hates those boots.
- ❖ "I remember going to recite at the festival in Two Hills."

Life at Baba and Gido's wasn't always easy. Discipline was strict. "Going to the store was an absolute no, no – even though there were 3 stores in Norma at the time. One day I came to school early and the teacher, Mrs. Shymaluk sent me for a loaf of bread. To my dismay, Gido was at the store and I got severely disciplined when I got home after school." "We were never allowed past the first flight of stairs at Baba and Gido's. We knew there was a gramophone there, so that was a huge temptation."

But life there could be fun as well. "One cold day when Gido came into the house, he raved about the raspberries, they were so plentiful and falling off the branches. I snuck out and went out to the summer kitchen and got a lard pail to go and pick raspberries." But Gido and Baba stopped her – there were no raspberries, it was the middle of winter!

"When I finished grade 1, Baba let me go home to visit my siblings and told me to come back. I was crying when I came back. She thought I was crying because I wanted to stay with her, but I wanted to go back home with my brothers and sisters."

Lillian has many memories of her Baba and Gido.

- ❖ Gido and Baba liked to visit - Nick Melnychuks, the Ursulaks, the Werenkas, the Buraks
- ❖ Gido had a horse he called "Chollie" which she recently figured out, he meant Charlie.
- ❖ Gido had bad feet – he wanted to scratch them all the time and Baba would scold him. In the springtime, he would take a stool and sit in the grass and the water and scratch his legs to his hearts content.
- ❖ "I remember Baba baking bread and putting it in the '*peech*' which was a little west of the summer house."
- ❖ "Baba had lots of flowers – tall sweet Williams, dahlias and all kinds of pansies. They were nice."
- ❖ Baba and Gido used to have a canary and he had the roam of the house. One day he met his misfortune when he fell into the soup!

- ❖ They had a big clock sitting on a corner shelf. It was a mini-grandfather clock, but she remembers them pulling the chains to wind it.
- ❖ Boona (great-grandmother) spent time at Baba and Gido's. She would spin wool into yarn and Gido would knit mitts. "The thumb was always big."
- ❖ "Boona was a very small built woman and taught me prayers – most of which I have unfortunately forgotten since then."
- ❖ Aunty Burak used to come over to Baba's and bake, especially for '*Xram*'.
- ❖ Baba did lots of crafts. She used to stencil flowers on the walls just under the ceiling. They had painted floors and she also stencilled flowers on the floor. She used to do punch work with yarn to make cushion tops. She also would make pysanky – Easter eggs. She also used to wrap oats with gold or silver foil from tobacco pouches and put them in between the storm window and window for decorations. It looked very pretty.

They had the most vicious dog. They got him as a puppy from Werenkas and he grew up to be very mean. Baba called him Lynx. "One day in summer I was bringing something for Baba and Gido. I came in to the summerhouse and I turned to go out and he wouldn't let me out. I waited for a long time. I took my chance a while later when I couldn't see him around. I was lucky to get home that day. Another time when we were going to leave an Easter basket for Gido, he wouldn't let us off the wagon. Baba was gone to Rochester for surgery and Gido didn't have an Easter basket that year."

Lillian started grade 2 in Pruth school. She remembers playing lots of games at school; Little Sally Saucer, go in and out the window, and skipping rope.

"In grade 6, I got strapped because I broke a chair. I leaned back in the chair and Orest pulled it out from under me. He got 4 straps, I got 2. The worst part was getting home and the boys had to say, "Lily got straps". Uncle Pete was visiting and I was so embarrassed because he was special company."

"Grade 10 I had to take mostly by correspondence as I was the only one left in school at this grade. Everyone else was bussed to Willingdon. Mr. Pawluk was my teacher. In Grade 11, the bus went past our house and I then went to Hairy Hill to school. While going to school in Hairy Hill in 1951, there was a bad snowstorm, so we stayed the weekend in Hairy Hill. Sylvester came with a sleigh and brought us

home but we were unable to return to school and missed some exams. Mom could not afford to send me to Willingdon or Vegreville for grade 12, so that was when I finished school."

Family has always been important to Lillian. "Sylvester and Eva and I were great pals, from small and even into our teen years when we would go to dances together."



On June 9, 1952, Lillian married George Sidor at the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Vegreville. This church is presently at the Ukrainian Historical Village at Elk Island.

George and Lillian are the parents of three children, Betty Kathleen born August 10, 1953; John Stephen, born March 20, 1956; and Irene Donna born January 30, 1959. They used to say it was good planning – one born on the 10th, the next on the 20th and the third on the 30th. Plus they were born in 53, 56, 59! Couldn't have any more, cause there isn't a 40th!

George held many jobs during his working career. When they were married, George worked for the Municipal District of Eagle, and George and Lillian resided on the farm with George's parents. In 1957, they moved to Hairy Hill where George drove a truck for Mike Tannas. In the fall of 1959, George purchased Romanko's Trucking business at Willingdon and moved his family to Willingdon. In March 1968, George quit his trucking business and found employment in Vegreville,

working for M and G Farm Equipment. The family followed and moved to Vegreville in August 1968. George later found employment in Vegreville with different jobs: Diachuk's, Sidor's Garbage Disposal, the county of Minburn and Able Security where he worked as a security guard until his retirement.

Lillian first found employment at the Homestead Lodge as an aide and then a cook and then at the Vegreville Nursing home as an aide where she worked until her retirement.



A small sample of Lillian's beautiful 'Pysanky' – Easter Eggs



Lillian loved to do different crafts and made many beautiful Easter eggs which she learnt to do while on the farm from Ann Kozniuk, a neighbour. She is proud to say that she has passed on this art to her granddaughter Amanda. She also became quite an artist and painted many flower bowls and decorations. She also did many other crafts – petit point, needlepoint, crewel, and paper tole, to name a few – and these are proudly displayed throughout their home.



They loved to spend their time at the lake, camping, fishing and boating and enjoyed many such days during their retirement. One of their favourite memories is taking the grandchildren boating and being told, "Give 'er Gido, let's go!"

Five Sidor generations: John, George, baby Madison, Lillian, Melissa and Sophie.



**At George and Lillian's 50th anniversary:
Back: John Sidor, Amanda Gaudet, Alex Gaudet, Irene Gaudet,
Darcy Kolewaski, Darryl Kolewaski, Betty Kolewaski, Bernie
Kolewaski. Front: Sophie Sidor, Lillian, George**

George and Lillian celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2002 surrounded by their family and many friends. Their family had grown to include 7 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild by this time.



**Lillian at the the site of the new cairn and monument at
St. Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Luzan**

George and Lillian have always been active members of the St. Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Luzan and the Luzan Community Center. One of the proud occasions for them was the 100th anniversary celebration of the church in 2005. They were a large part

of the organization of the event including the erection of a cairn for unmarked graves and monument honouring the founding members.

Lillian suffered a stroke in August of 2003, but with the help of her husband, has continued living at home in Vegreville.