

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LESTER BOWLES PEARSON, PC OM CC OBE

Inducted 2006

Lester Bowles Pearson was born in Newtonbrook Ontario on April 23, 1897, son of Rev. E.A. Pearson. Pearson came from both Irish and Loyalist stock, being a direct descendant of Loyalists William Marsh UE and his son Mathias Marsh UE. Pearson entered Victoria College of University of Toronto at age 16, but when war was declared, he volunteered to serve in hospital work through the University, being too young to serve. He later joined the Royal Flying Corps, where he was nicknamed "Mike", but was injured in two flying accidents and invalidated back to Canada, where he served as a training officer. Following the war, he completed his studies graduating in 1919 and enrolling at Oxford University under a two-year fellowship. He also excelled in athletics, competing in lacrosse and hockey. In 1924 he was hired to join the department of history at the University of Toronto.



Pearson left teaching in 1928 to serve as the first secretary in the Canadian Department of External Affairs, remaining in that position until 1935. Pearson moved forward rapidly. From 1935 to 1941 he served in the office of the High Commissioner for Canada in London; in May 1941, he was appointed assistant undersecretary of state for External Affairs at Ottawa; in June 1942, named minister-counselor at the Canadian Legation in Washington; in July 1944, promoted to the rank of minister plenipotentiary and in January 1945, to the rank of ambassador. Pearson took over the post of undersecretary of state for External Affairs in the fall of 1946, but gave it up two years later for the possibility of action in a larger arena. In 1948, Louis St. Laurent became prime minister of a Liberal government. Pearson was elected to represent the Algoma East riding of Ontario and was appointed as Minister of External Affairs, holding that position for nine years. Pearson also headed the Canadian delegation to the UN from 1946 to 1956, being elected as president of the Seventh Session of the General Assembly in 1952-1953. As chairman of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Palestine, he laid the groundwork for the creation of the state of Israel in 1947. In the Suez crisis of 1956, when the United Kingdom, France, and Israel invaded Egyptian territory, Pearson proposed and sponsored the resolution which created a United Nations Emergency Force to police that area, thus permitting the invading nations to withdraw with a minimum loss of face. It was for this action that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.

That year, the Liberals were defeated by the Conservatives under John Diefenbaker, but Pearson remained as leader of the opposition. He was elected as the 14th Prime Minister of Canada in 1963. Under his leadership, his minority government introduced universal health care, the Auto Pact, student loans, the Canada Pension Plan, the Order of Canada, and our current Canadian flag. During his tenure, Prime Minister Pearson also convened the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Pearson retired from politics in December of 1967, and lectured in History and Politics at Carleton University, where he served as chancellor from 1969 until his death on December 27, 1972. Over his life he received honorary degrees from 48 different universities. His name is also associated with many streets, schools, buildings and Canada's busiest airport in Toronto.

Lester B. Pearson was married on August 22, 1925 to Maryon Elspeth Moody, and they had two children, Geoffrey and Patricia. Pearson was buried in MacLaren Cemetery in Wakefield, Quebec.

He was inducted into the Bay of Quinte Branch Hall of Honour by Thelma Coulter on September 6, 2006.

ANCESTRY OF LESTER BOWLES PEARSON:

PARENTS:

Rev. EDWIN ARTHUR PEARSON born 21 May 1868 died 6 September 1931 married in Orangeville ON 17 July 1892 **ANNIE SARAH BOWLES** born 29 November 1868 Chinguacousy, Peel County, died 1960

GRANDPARENTS:

1) **Rev. MARMADUKE LOUIS PEARSON** born Dublin Ireland 2 June 1844 died 15 January 1915 in Toronto married 24 June 1867 at Consecon to **HESTER ANN MARSH** born 1846 Consecon, died 22 July 1910, Toronto.

2) **THOMAS BOWLES** born 27 July 1830 Chinguacousy, died 9 August 1913 married 1855 to **JANE LESTER** born 1833 died 29 July 1919, both buried in Orangeville ON

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS:

1) **MARMADUKE PEARSON** born Ireland circa 1824 married **CATHERINE** born Ireland circa 1821. They settled in Toronto.

2) **ABRAHAM MARSH** born 27 January 1806 Sidney Township died 17 April 1884 Cornwall, married 9 August 1832 **ABIGAIL WHITTIER** born 4 July 1812 Maine, died 28 November 1879 Ameliasburgh. She was buried in Consecon Cemetery.

3) **CHARLES BOWLES** born 1797 Tipperary, Ireland died 10 December 1879 in Albion, ON married 1824 to **NANCY ANNE BARRIE**, born circa 1795 Ireland died 24 February 1886 in Chinguacousy. They came to Canada in 1827 and settled in Chinguacousy Township circa 1829.

GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPARENTS:

1) **WILLIAM PEARSON** born circa 1797 Ireland, married **RACHEL LANCASTER**. They settled in Iberville, Quebec.

2) **MATTHIAS MARSH UE** born 1761 Vermont settled in Sidney and Ameliasburgh died 17 June 1829 Consecon, ON married 4 February 1783 to **SARAH RICHARDSON** born 1765 died 8 July 1815

3) **CLARKE WHITTIER** married **DEBORAH CLOUGH**

4) **GEORGE BOWLES** born circa 1765 Tipperary Ireland married **BARBARA YOUNG**. They settled in Chinguacousy circa 1830.

GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPARENTS:

1) **WILLIAM MARSH Sr. UE** born 1737 Vermont died 9 June 1816 in Vermont married **SARAH FRENCH** born 22 May 1741 died 29 March 1820 They came to the Bay of Quinte area but returned to Vermont.

2) **NATHAN RICHARDSON** born 1724 died 1799 married **PHEBE CROCKER** born 1727 died 1821