

Westbrook

Featured Resident



Edith Spencer

Edith Spencer was the third of four children born to Vernon and Winnie Albright. They lived about half way between Holt and Kearney - on the Holt side. She lived close to the Sommersette School which she attended for eight years. Edith loved to work on the farm with her father. She would help drive the team, harvest corn and do outside chores. She did not like to do housework and was glad her older sister did those chores. She also liked to ride horses. One time she climbed onto the back of a bareback mare. The mare's colt went over the hill and the mare took off after it. Edith was sure she was going to be thrown off but she managed to hang on somehow. When she was fifteen, the family moved just around the corner and ended up with a Kearney address. Edith attended and graduated from Kearney High School.

In February of her senior year, Edith reluctantly went out on a blind date with Benjamin Franklin Spencer. Her friend talked her into going and before the night was over, they knew they really liked each other. They started dating, which mainly consisted of going dancing at different places every Saturday night. Edith graduated in May and the couple was married in August.

When Ben was drafted into the Army, Edith moved with him to Abilene for basic training. They then moved to Wichita Falls, TX. Edith went to work in a denim clothing factory that was actually making pants for the military. The couple lived there until he was shipped overseas and Edith moved back to Kearney.

After the war was over, they moved back to Kearney and bought a house on N. Grove St. Edith went to work for Cook Paint in the accounting department - reconciling receipts from the various stores. After four years, she left Cook Paint and stayed home for a year before going to work for Kearney Commercial Bank - running the bookkeeping machine posting checks and deposits. She also worked as a teller.

Their dream was to own a farm. They weren't sure they could sell their house and buy a farm at the same time so they started renting a farm west of town. One day, Mr. Fry (of Fry Funeral Home) came into the bank and asked Edith for the keys to her house. She gave them to him and he took his wife out to see the house. He came back to the bank and bought their house. They started looking seriously for a farm and found one for sale out by the Sommersette school that they bought. Edith was back in her old neighborhood. Ben always said she didn't get far around this world.

Edith and Ben settled into married life, Ben worked in construction and they had livestock to care for on the farm. Life wasn't always easy for them. One day, a lady came into the bank and upon completing her business, she told Edith that her house was on fire. Edith left the bank quickly and arrived home shortly before her husband to find the house in flames. She had to keep Ben from running into the house to get things. Others arrived and a few things were saved but the house was a complete loss. For that winter, they lived in a house owned by an aunt and uncle. The aunt and uncle wanted to go to Florida for the winter so Ben and Edith took care of the house for them. By the time, they returned from Florida, Ben and Edith had a trailer house on their property to live in until the new house was completed. Ben and Edith wanted children but were unable to have any. They did take in a boy and girl from the St. Louis Christian Home for about a year. Ben passed away in 1987 and Edith continued to live on the farm for a while. She eventually sold the farm to a young neighboring couple and bought a house in Kearney on Ada Street. Edith took to traveling the United States with different tour groups. Some of her traveling companions were Sue Porter, Georgia Lee Tapp, Cordelia Spencer, Wilma Riley and Eleanor Britt. She went on a cruise that went from Washington to Alaska and back down the coast of Canada. She always wanted to go back and see more of Alaska but never did.

Edith said she used to garden until the year her sister-in-law told her that she could buy all the things she was growing in the grocery store. She never had another garden. She did love to sew. She sewed mainly for herself but did make four bridesmaid dresses for her niece's wedding. She was also involved in a bridge club for many years.

Edith moved her to Westbrook in March of 2014. She had decided she wasn't able to take care of her house anymore. She loves the fact that the meals are provided, there is entertainment to be had and that she doesn't have to do any upkeep.

Even though, Edith never had any children of her own, she has been very blessed with many nieces and nephews. Most of them live in the area and visit her often. She has pictures of all of them on her dresser. The smile on her face as she talks about them shows the love she has for her family.

Everyone at Westbrook Care Center did a very good job. The staff was on top of everything and if anything ever came up with my mom they would call me right away. - Travis C.

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