

THE ARLIE WHEELER FAMILY

It is impossible within this short space to tell very much of this story; however, this is an opportunity to set down in one place some vital statistics about each member.

The main point that needs to be noted and remembered is that of the great love and devotion the parents, Arlie and Lulu, had for each other and for their children and which far surpassed the numerous heartaches, disappointments and sacrifices they may have had.

A Harper County newspaper recorded the beginning of this family with the following words, "Married, December 24, 1912, between 5 and 6 p.m., at the home of Reverend S. T. Love, near Readout, Arlie Wheeler and Miss Lulu Rector, both of the Readout vicinity."

Arlie Clyde Wheeler came with his family to a farm in Woods County, Oklahoma in 1901 at the age of 12 and lived there until 1903, when they moved to a homestead in Harper County. He was born in East Lynn, Missouri, October 18, 1888, the son of David Andrew Wheeler and Jennie Hinote, of German, Dutch, English and Scotch ancestry, some of whom first arrived in America in 1624. He had ancestors who served in the American Revolutionary War, the French and Indian War, the Civil War, a brother Lloyd, who served in WWI, two sons who served in WWII, and a grandson, Terry Shepherd, who served in the Vietnam War.

Arlie had two brothers, Lloyd and Fred, and two sisters, Audrey and Ella.

Lulu Gertrude (Rector) Wheeler was born in Milan, Missouri on June 2, 1891, the daughter of Milton Amon Rector and Charlotte Ann Senate. She came by train with her family from Missouri to Oklahoma and arrived at Woodward, Oklahoma on January 1, 1901. Her father, Milton Amon Rector, had been a wagon maker and blacksmith in Missouri and continued the blacksmith trade at Readout and England, Kansas. He brought with him on the train besides his family, livestock, chickens, farm equipment, blacksmith tools and \$35 in cash. Her family moved to a homestead one mile north of Readout. He had come out to Harper County in September of 1900 and had staked out his claim which he moved onto in 1901. Lulu's father, Milton, had come to Missouri by way of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. Her mother, Charlotte Ann Senate, married her father in Taswell County, Illinois, on November 28, 1878. She had one sister, Mabel, and six brothers, Elmer, John, Gee, Ross, Harry and Ralph. She descended from Scotch, Dutch and Irish ancestry, some of whom also arrived in America before the Revolutionary War. It should be pointed out here that Lulu and Arlie's ancestors were church-going people who interestingly enough all seemed to be affiliated with a Methodist church from the very beginning of their arrival in this country.

The newspaper story which appeared in the Harper County newspaper dated December 24, 1912, went on to say, "The young couple will move on to the school quarter which was purchased recently southeast of Readout."

On the school quarter, or "school section" as it was called by the Wheelers, since other land was purchased near the quarter, Arlie and Lula moved into a two-room house built by Arlie and his brothers. This farm was located approximately six miles southeast of Readout, and some 10 or 11 miles northeast of Laverne. The picture of the little house is shown on the next page. In this house were born Bernice Geneva, May 24, 1914; Gwenda Lea, December 4, 1918; Lois Arlene, September 1, 1916, who died at age 8 on August 23, 1925; Clyde Arlie Wheeler, Jr., March 12, 1921; and Fred Rector, May 12, 1923.

The Depression and crop failures saw the loss of the "school section" in 1929 and the Wheeler family then moved to the Uncle John Senate farm, two miles southeast of Readout. John Senate was Lula Wheeler's uncle. On this farm were born Betty Lu, March 15, 1925 and Bonnie Bee July 27, 1926.

In 1930 the Wheeler family moved to the Grandad Rector farm one mile north of Readout. At this farm, Ruby Ann was born on August 21, 1933.

By this time the Wheeler family had experienced great hardship from crop failures and low farm prices, but the

greatest heartache of all was the loss of a dear member of the family, Lois Arlene. She died August 23, 1925 from complications of an appendicitis operation. Throughout it all, however, there was a great abundance of love and happiness and none of the children seem to be aware of the economic hardtimes that existed throughout a large part of their childhood.

All but Ruby Ann of the brothers and sisters attended grade school in the one-room Readout school. Bernice, Gwenda Lea and C. A. went all eight years here. Bernice graduated from high school at Roston, Oklahoma, the others from Laverne High School.

The family moved to the Vice farm in 1934, three miles southwest of Laverne and to the Thomas farm in 1940. In 1942 the family purchased and moved to a farm located 12 miles southwest of Laverne, on the Harper Beaver County line. By this time Bernice and Gwenda Lea had been married and C. A. had been in Wichita, Kansas since September of 1938, attending business college and working. Fritz joined C. A. in Wichita for one year prior to entering the Marine Corps in WW II.

Both Fritz and C. A. served in WW II, with Fritz seeing action in Guadalcanal, Guam and Okinawa. C. A. spent three and a half years in the Army and Navy Air Corps, all in the United States. Fritz was discharged as a corporal and C. A. as a Lt. jg.

And now for a few words about the families of each one of the children of the Arlie Wheeler family.

Bernice married John D. Beasley of Laverne, in 1935, and they lived in Shattuck, Oklahoma until the beginning of WW II. They then moved to the state of Washington, and after the war moved to their present home in Madras, Oregon. Bernice and John D. have two children, Sandra Lea and Mark. Sandra is married to Lowell Nichols and they have two children. Mark is an officer in the U. S. Coast Guard. John D. is an electrical contractor and owns his own business.

Gwenda Lea married Terrel Haight in 1936, who was killed in an airplane crash in 1955. In 1958 she married Alfred Barby, of Meade, Kansas, and lives there now. Alfred had two children, Allen and Jean Ann, and Gwenda Lea had one son, William Clyde. Alfred operates a large ranch unit and has been active in associations connected with the ranching business. All three of their children attended college and Bill is well on his way to completing work for a bachelor degree.

C. A. married Barbara Ann Dodd of Garber and Enid, Oklahoma, on August 23, 1953. Barbara graduated from the Garber, Oklahoma high school and from Oklahoma University with a degree in economics. To this marriage was born three children, Barbara Ruth, November 27, 1954, Clyde Arlie, III, January 25, 1957 and Jane Dodd, October 1, 1959. At the time report is

being written, this family lives in the Washington, D. C. metropolitan area, where C. A. represents the Sun Oil Company with the federal government. In the 1950's C. A. worked as the administrative assistant to Congressman Page Belcher of Oklahoma, as special assistant to the secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, and as staff assistant to President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 1960 he and Barbara conducted a successful congressional campaign (6th District) and was elected by 188 votes, but was counted out in a special recount in December of that year by 76 votes. C. A. has a bachelors and masters degree from Oklahoma State University in history and government and a life teaching certificate from Oklahoma City University.

Fred "Fritz" Wheeler, a farmer southwest of Laverne, married Jeanne Woods of Catesby in 1947. To this marriage were born Nancy Lea, December 18, 1948, Beverly Joe, September 8, 1950; Anson Craig, November 20, 1953 and Eric Fred, July 1, 1963. Fritz and Jeanne operate a successful farm southwest of Laverne and are active in many civic, school and church affairs. Nancy graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in nursing, and Beverly graduated from Northwestern State College with a degree in education. Craig is well on his way to completing work for a degree at Oklahoma State University. It is expected that Eric will also obtain a college education.

Betty Lu married Chester Shepherd of Catesby in 1943. He and Betty lived on a farm southwest of Laverne for a few

years and then moved to Madras, Oregon in 1945. To this marriage was born Anthony Byron, October 30, 1944, Terry Clyde, March 3, 1947, Renee, October 8, 1949 and Randy, December 10, 1953. All of these children attended college, but Terry is the only one who graduated with a bachelors degree. The Shepherds operate an irrigated farm in the Madras, Oregon community, and are active in local civic and school affairs.

Bonnie Bee married Loren (Bud) Mulbery of the Laverne community in 1945. Loren is commonly known as Bud, and grew up in the Laverne community near the Beaver, Harper County line. To this marriage was born Dianna Lynne in 1948, who died in 1950; Shirley, December 26, 1950; Danny, July 21, 1952; Veronica, February 27, 1955 and David, July 3, 1960. Shirley is married to Marvin Henricks, and has graduated from Oklahoma State University with high honors. Bud and Bonnie operate a stock farm northwest of Laverne.

Ruby Ann married Harold Miner of Rosston in 1951. To this family were born three children, Timothy Casey Wheeler, born and died on the same day in 1952; Rocky, October 22, 1954 and Brooke, in 1958. Harold is a basketball coach and industrial arts teacher and has taught in schools in Kansas and Oregon. This family lives at Sweet Home, Oregon, at this time. Harold graduated from Northwestern State College with a bachelors degree and has done some work on a masters degree. Ruby has most of her work for a bachelors degree and teaches, usually in the same school with Harold. Rocky, at the time of this

report, is attending college and is expected to graduate. Brooke is also expected to attend college and graduate. Harold and Ruby lived for a while in Oklahoma and Kansas, but moved to Oregon in 1956.

Another six hundred words or ten thousand, or an entire book could be written about Lulu's struggle with a brain tumor (three operations), which eventually claimed her complete eyesight by 1945, and her life on October 11, 1962. It never claimed her mental faculties or good cheer and interest and love for her family. The same kind of long story could be written about Arlie's struggle (two operations) with cancer of the colon, which took his life January 2, 1959.

Arlie and Lulu lived useful lives, loved their family and friends and left a heritage, which if followed, will serve others well also.