

Obituaries

Jerdene Bruce Barnhart

Aug. 21, 1931 - Aug. 25, 2007

Jerdene Bruce Barnhart died on Aug. 25, 2007 at Swedish Medical Center in Englewood, Colo., from complications of injuries received while working at the St. Francis Livestock Salebarn. Working with cattle and horses is what Jerdene had loved all of his life.

Jerdene, the fifth of eight children and the son of Harvey and Irene (Moore) Barnhart was born on Aug. 21, 1931. He grew up north of St. Francis on the Hackberry Creek on the ranch his grandfather, John Barnhart, had established. It was there at the age of 3 years that he and his siblings lost their mother Irene to the Republican River flood in 1935.

On Nov. 7, 1954, Jerdene married Barbara Rae Clouse in Benkelman, Neb. Five months after they were married, in 1955, Jerdene and Barbara moved to the family ranch. Jerdene and Barbara were blessed with six children; 17 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Jerdene loved people and easily made a friend wherever he went. Many family memories were made through square dancing and roller skating. John Wayne movies, Johnnie Cash and polka music assured everyone that Jerdene was a true cowboy inside as well as out. He enjoyed being a member of the Odd Fellows and, along with his wife, attended the First Baptist Church.

Jerdene made it clear to his children that they were his greatest wealth in life. The love he showered upon his family could be felt more than once, through the family outings along with taking in his kids sporting events and gymkhana, which he followed diligently. In later years nothing seemed to enlighten Jerdene more than family gatherings where his home was overflowing with his children and their spouses along with grandchildren.

He had become especially tickled when granddaughter Lindsay, after reading a family history story compiled by Manota Daniels, had nicknamed him "Little Jerdie." The nick-name stuck, and even Barb referred to Jerdene when talking to Lindsay as "Little Jerdie." Jerdene also was known as Jerd and Barney.

Jerdene and Barbara moved off of the ranch to St. Francis in 2001 but he still continued to drive to the ranch everyday. When the idea of bringing a computer into the home was brought up, Jerdene strongly balked, adding that they were a useless piece of equipment. After setting one up, free-time found him with a long e-mail list and sending and receiving jokes, stories and making new friends.

Semi-retired, Jerdene could not quite give up what had been a large part of his life, his ranch and the few quarter horses he had kept from a long line of quarter horses he had raised years ago. He was also very proud that his children were avid horsemen.

Through the years, Jerdene showed his love of ranching by helping at several salebarns in the tri-state area including the St. Francis Livestock Commission, Imperial Auction Market, Benkelman Horse Sale and the Burlington Livestock Exchange.

Left to mourn his death are his wife Barbara; five children: Delbert Barnhart and wife Sharon, St. Francis; Doug Barnhart and wife Sandy, St. Francis; Debbie Blakeman and husband John, Merna, Neb.; Donald Barnhart, Denver; Daryl Barnhart and wife

Yvonne, McCook. Grandchildren: Derek Barnhart and wife Stephanie, Benkelman; Cassidy Barnhart, Kennesaw, Ga.; Cody Barnhart and Brandi Barnhart, both of St. Francis; Bruce Barnhart, Oakley; Jason Barnhart and wife Amanda, Brighton, Colo.; Chase Barnhart, St. Francis; Kyle Blakeman, Utica, Neb.; Kevin and Lindsay Blakeman, Merna, Neb.; Brandon Stewart, Stratton, Colo.; Cameron, Clayton and Danny Barnhart all of Denver; Morgan and Trey Barnhart, McCook. Great-granddaughter Madison Barnhart, Benkelman.

Also are four sisters, Manota Daniels, Stratton, Neb; Macalene Olson and husband Alden, McDonald; Wilma Petsch and husband Jess, Guiderock, Neb.; Willa Scott and husband Claude, Gonzales, La.; and two brothers, Jim Barnhart and wife Mildred and Maurice Barnhart and wife Janice, both of St. Francis; sister-in-law Louise Barnhart, Akron, Colo.; sister-in-law Elsie Mae Hardwick and husband Eldon and brother-in-law, Sam Clouse and wife Karen of Walsenburg, Colo.; and many nieces, nephews and their families.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother John Barnhart in 2005; son, Daniel Moore in 1980 and grandson Cole Lynn Barnhart in 1996.

Funeral services were held on Aug. 29 at the First Baptist Church in St. Francis with Pastor J.W. Glidewell officiating.

Casket bearers were grandchildren: Bruce Barnhart, Cassidy Barnhart, Derek Barnhart, Jason Barnhart, Brandon Stewart, Kyle Blakeman, Cody Barnhart, Kevin Blakeman, Brandi Barnhart, Cameron Barnhart, Chase Barnhart, Lindsay Blakeman, Clayton Barnhart, Morgan Barnhart, Danny Barnhart and Trey Barnhart.

Interment was in the St. Francis Cemetery.

Knodel Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Velta Katherine Johnson

Sept. 20, 1906 - Aug. 26, 2007

Velta Katherine Johnson, 100 years, 11 months and 6 days old, a lifelong resident of this area, died at the Hester Home, Benkelman, Neb., on Sunday, Aug. 26, 2007, where she had been a resident for the past 3 1/2 years.

Velta Katherine Pyle, was the second of nine children born to George William Pyle and Mary Elizabeth Kohler Pyle. She was born Sept. 20, 1906, in a sod house on the Beaver River south of Bird City, Kan. When she was 1-year-old the family moved to the Big Timber Community, north of Bird City, where she attended the White Eagle and Baker schools.

She married Harold T. Johnson at Holyoke, Colo., on Oct. 5, 1929. God blessed them with four children, Dorothy, Melvin, Merle and Delores. Shortly after the marriage, they moved to the Big Timber Community where they farmed until Harold's death in 1975. Velta then moved into Bird City, where she resided until her move to the Hester Home, 3 1/2 years ago.

Besides her close and loving relationship with her large family and many friends, she loved her life on the farm and sharing that life with family, grandchildren, friends and visitors. Her faith in God and Savior Jesus Christ, along with her church family sustained her through many trials and tribulations throughout her lifetime.

Some of her most memorable times were her travels in the "Fun Bus," an old school bus which several

area residents purchased in 1982, then restored and repainted. Travel expenses were shared and the group traveled to many places including Nashville, Tenn., Black Hills, S.D., Carlsbad Caverns, N.M., Branson, Mo., Grand Canyon, Ariz., Colorado Springs, and Amarillo, Texas, during the next several years.

Velta is survived by all four of her children: Dorothy Chipperfield and husband, Clifford of Benkelman, Harold Melvin (Mux) and wife, Ramona of Bird City, Merle and wife, Doris of Whitney, Texas, and Delores Spiker and husband, Don of Goodland; grandchildren: Lyle Chipperfield of Kellogg, Idaho, Ray Johnson and wife, Pam of Bird City, Allan Johnson and wife, Anna of Goodland, Randy Johnson of St. Francis, Ronda Staats and husband, Brent of Liberal, Shelly Presley and husband, Matt of Liberal, Mary Krueger and husband, Steve of Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Tina Taraska and husband, Ryan of Las Vegas, Nev.; sisters, Eva Murray of St. Francis and Mildred Ward of Murritta, Calif.; brother: Dale Lighthill of Oak Harbor, Wash.; 18 great-grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, along with many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Harold; her parents; five brothers, George Leroy Pyle, Norris Elmer Pyle, Olen Leo Pyle, Floyd Donald Pyle and Robert William Pyle; two granddaughters, Christina Johnson and Berry Mansfield and one grandson, Rich Johnson.

Memorial services were held Aug. 30 at St. John Lutheran Church, Bird City, with the Pastor Charolette Strecker-Baseler and Marcine Farmer, PMA officiating.

Pallbearers were grandsons Randy Johnson, Ray Johnson, Allen Johnson and great-grandsons, A.J. Johnson, L.J. Loop and Taylor Staats. Burial was in the Benkelman Cemetery, beside her husband of 46 years.

The family requests that memorials be sent to the Hester Rest Home, Box 646, Benkelman, NE 69021.

Helen Pauline Roelfs

Sept. 1, 1916 - Aug. 21, 2007

Helen Roelfs died Tuesday, Aug. 21, 2007, 11 days after her 66th wedding anniversary and 11 days before her 91st birthday. She leaves family and friends to cherish memories of her joyous smile, her unwavering faith, and her persevering spirit.

Helen was born in rural Cheyenne County, Kan., the fourth of eight children, to John and Matilda Keller. Her early years facing the sun, wind and blizzards of the high plains were an important part of her life and she loved to tell stories of years working on the farm. She attended Fort Hays State Teacher's College (now Hays State University) then taught for three years in a one-room school near her home north of St. Francis.

In 1941, she married her long-time friend, Harry Roelfs, and they established a home in Vancouver, Wash., where they raised two children.

Helen was a consummate homemaker and volunteer. She loved to cook, sew, garden and put up fruits and vegetables. Her dill pickles and frozen strawberry jam were family favorites.

As a mom, she served as a room mother and 4-H leader.

At Memorial Lutheran Church, where she was a member for over 60 years, she taught Sunday School and Confirmation class. Most recently, she has been a part of the church quilting group.

She is survived by her husband, Harry Roelfs in Vancouver; daughter, Harriet Scholle of Saint Louis, Mo.; son, Vernon Roelfs of Anchor-

age, Alaska; sister, Bertha Hilt and brothers, Albert, Robert and Elton Keller, all in St. Francis; three grandsons; two great-grandchildren; and scores of relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother, Edward Keller; sister, Ella Stanhope; and a brother who died as an infant.

Helen is buried in Vancouver and a memorial service for her was held at her church on Aug. 24. Memorials may be sent to Helen Roelfs Memorial, Memorial Lutheran Church, 2700 East 28th street, Vancouver, WA, 98661.

Clarence August Henry Busse

Nov. 29, 1914 - Aug. 28, 2007

Clarence August Henry Busse was born Nov. 29, 1914, on a farm located north of Hubbell, Neb. He died Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2007, in Benkelman, Neb., at the age of 92 years and nine months.

His parents were August Henry and Anna Marie Greisler Busse. He was baptized on Jan. 1, 1915, by Rev. M. Stricker, pastor of Gilead Lutheran Country Church in Thayer County, Neb. In 1918, he moved to Cheyenne County, Kan., to live on the farm homesteaded by his maternal grandparents, Henry and Albertine Greisler.

Clarence was an active farm boy. By the age of 7, he was driving a four-horse team in the field. He attended the Red Cross Country School for two years. He then went to Mount Pleasant School. Using a horse and buggy, he transported his siblings and neighbors to school.

He was confirmed on March 31, 1929, at St. John Lutheran Church.

In 1928, he was the county champion Corn Club member and belonged to Kanred Winners 4-H Club.

During high school he was active in HIY and FFA where he was the second president of the chapter. He played basketball and went to the state tournament in 1932. Clarence enjoyed playing baseball with the Lutheran team and later on the Bird City team.

Clarence missed many days of school to help his dad with the farming. He drove cattle to the Bird City stockyard. In 1933, he and his father took three car loads of cattle to the Union Stockyards in Chicago riding in the caboose. They stayed to attend the World's Fair. During the Great Depression, he and his friends picked peaches in Colorado and picked up potatoes in Idaho.

He was drafted into the Army Air Corp in 1942. He was stationed at several bases across the United States serving in many capacities including being a chemical warfare instructor and a heavy equipment operator. He received his honorable discharge in Seattle, Wash., in 1945. He had been training for the invasion of Japan. He was a member of the American Legion for over 60 years.

Ten days before entering the service, Clarence met Minnie Louise Theresa Oestmann at a Luther League camp. They married Aug. 3, 1944, in Posey, Texas. After military service, they returned to their farm 12 miles south of Bird City, which he had purchased prior to the war.

He raised registered polled Hereford cattle and had one of the earliest irrigation wells.

They were blessed with three children, Daniel Paul, David Louis and Patricia Sue.

Clarence was a member of St. John Lutheran Church and was active in Luther League, Lutheran Brotherhood and choir. He was elected to the church council serving in various positions over the years. He loved his

church and remained active throughout his life.

He was community minded serving on the Bird City Equity Board for eighteen years. He also served on the school board, Cheyenne County Fair Board, and Cheyenne County Extension Board. He served as Bird City Alumni president and Alexander Township Trustee.

Clarence was preceded in death by parents, August and Anna; wife, Minnie; sister, Esther Darnauer and brothers, Paul and Martin.

He is survived by son, Dan and wife, Lynn of Bird City; son, Dave and wife, Teri of Omaha, Neb.; and daughter, Pat and husband, Jim Cooksey of Houston, Texas; grandchildren, Ryan and wife, Sara of Kalispell, Mont., Cory and wife, Jenny of St. Francis, Andrea and husband, Bart Savelkoul of Lansford, N.D., Shane Jacobs of Omaha, Lari Jacobs of Omaha, Craig Cooksey of Ventura, Calif.; Ky Cooksey of Houston and Kate Cooksey of San Marcos, Texas; great-grandchildren: Lander Busse, Tate, Cassidy and Benjamin Busse, Henry, Joseph and Ginger Savelkoul, Jake and Emily Jacobs; sister, Ruth and husband, Louis of Cottonwood, Ariz.; sister-in-law, Ella Bergmann of Auburn, Neb.; sister-in-law, JoAnn Scott of Goodland, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Sept. 1 at St. John Lutheran Church in Bird City with Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler and Shirley Daire PMA officiating.

The song "This Little Light of Mine," was sung by great-grandchildren, Henry, Joe, Ginger Savelkoul and Lander, Tate, Cassidy, and Ben Busse.

Honorary pallbearers were members of the Pinochle Club, Wayne and Erma Deeds, Keith and Hulda Dorsch, Esther Linin, Walt Roensner, Vernetta Haack and Frieda Black.

Casket bearers were grandchildren and nephews, Ryan Busse, Cory Busse, Andrea Savelkoul, Ky Cooksey, Craig Cooksey, Kate Cooksey, Shane Jacobs, Larry Jacobs, Steve Busse and Ron Busse.

Interment was in the Bird City Cemetery with a military graveside service by the Fort Riley Honor Guard.

Arrangements by Knodel Funeral Home.

Lela Berniece Smith

July 12, 1921 - Aug. 17, 2007

Lela Berniece Smith, 86, St. Francis, Kan., died Friday, Aug. 17, 2007.

Mrs. Smith was born Lela Berniece Soule on July 12, 1921, in Wray, Colo. She was a homemaker.

She was preceded in death by a son, Larry, in 1946.

Survivors include her husband, Clyde, of St. Francis; three sons, Jim of Wray, Robert "Bob" of Haigler, Neb., and Ron "Buster" of St. Francis; three daughters, Janice Irwin of Haigler, Shirley Smith of St. Francis and Patricia "Trish" Leisure of Bird City; a sister, Nola Dillon of Denver; 17 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on Wednesday, Aug. 22, at Knodel Funeral Home. Burial was in the St. Francis Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Cheyenne County Hospital in St. Francis.

Harold (Bud) Everett Cress

Jan. 24, 1924 - Aug. 21, 2007

Harold (Bud) Everett Cress died Tuesday, Aug. 21, 2007, at the Hill Crest Care Center in Wray, Colo. He was born Jan. 24, 1924, on the family farm located 16 miles southwest of Bird City. Bud was the youngest son of Everett Edgar and Louise Emelia (Roesch) Cress. He grew up on the family farm with two brothers, Carl and Clarence (Frank) and two sisters, Marie and Pearl.

Bud and his siblings attended school at the South Star School located southwest of the family farm where he completed eight years of education. Throughout the years, he shared stories of school days with family and old school friends.

Bud and his family lived in Loveland, Colo., for two years and Bentonville, Ark., for two years. The family always returned to the family farm in Kansas.

On Feb. 10, 1945, Bud was inducted into the U.S. Army at Fort Logan, Colo. Basic training was completed in Texas then he was sent to Fort Ord, Calif. Bud was placed in the 6th Division, 1st Infantry Regiment. From Fort Ord, the regiment was sent to the Philippines. On the way home from the Philippines, the bomb was dropped on Japan. Then in 1945, he was sent to South Korea. On June 20, 1946, he received an Honorable Discharge at Fort Douglas, Utah, as a Sergeant.

Bud returned home to take over the family farm after his father died in March of 1943.

On April 25, 1951, Bud Cress married Corrine Mae Holscher at the home of Corrine's parents. He spent the remaining years on the family farm where they raised two children, Douglas and Denise.

In December 1951, Bud was baptized and confirmed into the Lutheran faith at St. John Lutheran Church in Bird City. He remained a faithful servant to the Lord for the remainder of his life.

He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, Dustin, Kelsey and Emily.

Bud was preceded in death by his wife, Corrine; his parents, Everett and Louise Cress; parents-in-law, Joy and Emma Rambat Holscher; brothers, Carl and Frank Cress and sister, Pearl Franklin and husband, Orville Franklin.

Bud is survived by son, Douglas and wife, Mary Jo and granddaughter, Emily Cress of Sterling, Colo., daughter, Denise and husband, Randy Andrist of St. Francis; grandson, Dustin Andrist and wife, Sharissa of St. Francis; granddaughter, Kelsey Andrist of Hays; sister, Marie Kowalke of Wray, Colo.; sister-in-law, Beulah Cress of Edson; sister-in-law, Marlene Young and husband, Gene Young of Bird City; nieces, nephews, various other family members and a community of friends.

Services were held Saturday, Aug. 25, at St. John Lutheran Church in Bird City, with interment at the St. Francis Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Ken Brady, Don Gilliland, John Hendricks, Gary Moore, Greg Walters and Gary Whitlock.

Memorials may be made to the Harold (Bud) Cress Memorial Fund.

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BEECHER ISLAND 108th Reunion

Saturday, Sept. 15th

Quilt show presented by the Beecher Is Helping Hand Club
6 a.m. ☐ Breakfast available from the Idalia FCE Bicentennial Club
9 a.m. ☐ Black Powder Shoot with the Idalia Gun Club
10 a.m. ☐ Pedal Tractor Pull
Wray Lions concessions available throughout the day.
"The Swinging Seniors" Musical Entertainment
1 p.m. ☐ Games & races begin.
Also dryland turtle race registration.
The BEST TURTLE RACES following other races.
7 p.m. ☐ CALL OF THE WEST - Performing together with Tex and Mary Schultz in a concert of Western Country Gospel and Comedy Music.



Sunday, Sept. 16th

6 a.m. ☐ Pancake Breakfast with the Idalia Lions Club
9:45 a.m. ☐ Flag Raising by area Boy Scouts.
10 a.m. ☐ Sunday Services with guest speaker and music
1 p.m. ☐ History presentation by Jeff Broome
Singing of Arikaree
Loretta Thompson, master fiddler, accompanied by Tom Broderick on guitar.
Raffle drawing for quilt and baskets by Beecher Island Helping Hand Club.

Handmade Items will be on display in the Old Sunday School all Weekend.

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