

# 2012 thresher show queen announced during show

The 2012 Tri-State Antique Engine and Thresher Show Queen was announced on Thursday afternoon.

Manette Anderson Henderson was honored as the Thresher Queen. Vernetta Haack is the outgoing queen and had her doll ready to be put in the showcase in the Eggers' building.

Mrs. Henderson was born on Nov. 17, 1920, on a farm in Cheyenne County. She had an older sister, Florence, to welcome her into the family.

Her father, Gene Anderson, died in April 1923. He was caught in a late spring snow storm and had pneumonia and ear infection. At that time, there were no antibiotics and he was unable to survive.

"My mother was left with three small daughters including Florence, who was 4 years old, myself, 2 1/2 years old, and Jean, 5 months old," she said. "Mom had been a school teacher before she married, but that was out of the question now."

The family moved in with Mrs. Anderson's brother, Robert Standish where they lived until June 1925. That was when Mrs. Anderson married a neighboring farmer, Dick Pearson. Three more sisters joined the family, Nancy, Nadine and Inez. Today, Mrs. Henderson has only two sisters left, Nadine Bryan of Lincoln, Neb., and Inez Bargo, St. Francis.

Manette started school just before she turned 5 at the Lawn Ridge School and attended through the eighth grade. One thing she remembers about her early school year was, since she was so young, her teacher, Inez Boyer (later Mrs. Roy Price) insisted that she take a nap each afternoon.

"I had no intention on wasting my time sleeping but she was the boss," she said. "I remember that she sent me to the barn as punishment—that was only once."

I enjoyed going to school, she said. We walked 1 1/4 miles to school which wasn't too bad during nice weather but that was a different story when it got cold and snowy. If it was really stormy, my stepfather would take us, but the way I remember it, that didn't happen very often.

One thing she enjoyed about school was — there were books to read! I loved to read then and still do now, she said.

The county superintendent was

Vada Sapp and Mrs. Henderson remembered the teacher always instructed the students to be on our best behavior when she was scheduled to visit our school. I can imagine, she said, that the teacher was quite tense, hoping the superintendent would be impressed with her teaching ability.

When she was home, there was plenty of work to be done. They milked cows then separated the milk and fed the calves and pigs.

Her mother always raised a big flock of chickens because she planned on the money she got from the eggs to buy the week's groceries. Selling cream also supplemented the grocery money.

They had a garden which helped provide food for the family. They canned tomatoes and pickles from the garden and bought peaches, pears and grapes. Usually someone came around selling sand plums which made wonderful jams and jellies.

"I enjoyed helping with the canning and still do to this day," she said.

The family butchered their own pork and chickens. Once in a while someone would come by the farm selling fish. They were really salty and had to be soaked in fresh water quite a while before we could eat them. However, she said, they made a welcome change to our diet.

She was young when she started working in homes helping take care of children or helping with new babies. She remembered working for one family when she was 13 years old that was expecting a new baby and already had three children.

"It was harvest time so I helped with the cooking, laundry and the children," she said. "The lady always insisted that I rest in the afternoon and I didn't argue with her because we got up at 5 a.m. to prepare breakfast for the harvesters."

She had several jobs helping families and she said she always welcomed them because she earned money. The going wage was around \$3.50 a week and she was able to buy her first pair of white shoes.

After graduating from the eighth grade, Manette and her sister, Florence, went to Akron, Colo., where they stayed with their mother's sister and her husband. She attended her freshman

year in school there then they came home that summer and went to St. Francis high school the next two years.

My senior year, there was no money for school, she said, so I went back to helping new mothers and caring for their children.

Manette married Leonard Henderson, a hometown boy, on Jan. 1, 1939. They set up house-keeping in St. Francis. Leonard was a body and fender repairman and later worked many years for Hancock Motor Company. They purchased their house on Denison Street in St. Francis in 1941 and that is still her home today.

They had six children. Their first son was born with a faulty ear and lived just 13 days. In 1941, Delbert was born, followed by Deanna in 1944. Sharon was born in 1947, Sandra in 1948 and Dale in 1950.

Manette said she always tried to have a vegetable garden and flowers and she also wanted a lawn. We had a large yard which was big enough for all the neighborhood kids to come and play. I liked that, she said, because then I always knew where my kids were.

Manette said an older lady once told her, "You can't raise grass and children. Enjoy your children now and the grass will come later." And, Manette said, she was right!

Manette was a stay-at-home mom until Dale was old enough to go to school and then she went to work for Irene Andrist in the cafe downtown. Later, she worked at the Good Samaritan Village in the laundry room. At that time, she said, they were screening people out of Larned so I met some very interesting people.

While she was employed at the Village, Dr. Peck came and asked me if I would consider taking care of Mrs. Peck in their home as she was in very poor health. I accepted the offer and took care of her for two years until she required more care than I could give.

About that time, Mrs. Roach, Dr. Peck's nurse for many years, was diagnosed with cancer. She knew she was not able to handle all the work at the office and



2012 THRESHER QUEEN Manette Henderson, middle, is announced by Phyllis Wright, left, as Vernetta Haack, right, presents the queen with a gift. Herald photo by Norma Martinez.

asked if I could help her there.

Mrs. Henderson worked in the office for the next 10 years until Dr. Peck's death.

While I was working for Dr. Peck, she said, I decided I wanted to get my high school diploma.

So, she visited with Mr. Sperry, the high school principal, and a schedule was worked out. She would attend classes in the morning and still be able to help Mrs. Roach in the doctor's office. She took one-half of the needed courses the first year and then continued the next year. She graduated with the class of 1962.

Many of those classmates were very friendly to me, she said, as her daughter, Deanna, was in the same class. This year, she and Manette celebrated their 50th alumni year.

Sadly, she said, Mrs. Roach did not live to see me graduate from high school but she gave me a lot of encouragement while

she was living.

"Things always have a way of working out when you can't see around the corner," Mrs. Henderson said.

After Dr. Peck's death, Robert Alsop called and said, "Before you take another job, call me."

Mrs. Henderson called and she was offered a job in the Cheyenne County Abstract office where she worked for 19 years. Then, she said, I retired... until six years later when Ethel Whitten and Rachael Keller, the operators of the St. Francis Senior Center, asked me if I would consider helping with the cooking there. I took that job and stayed there for four years until I needed a pacemaker, and, then I retired again!

The children were all married and the grandchildren began to arrive. I have 12 grandchildren but I have lost three grandsons, she said. I have 17 great-grandchildren and three great-grand-

grandchildren along with several step grands and great grands.

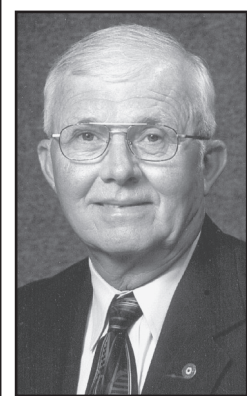
After her first retirement, she traveled some but decided she just like staying at home. Since her final retirement, she is enjoying church, a ladies Bible class, friends and family. She takes care of her yard with many flowers and a few tomato and cucumber plants. She still crochets, knits, sews and reads.

"I am very fortunate that all five of my children live close by," she said.

Delbert and his wife, Bonnie, as well as daughter Deanna Forsythe and Dale live in St. Francis. Sharon and her husband, Duane Harper, and Sandra and her husband, Rick McElwee, live in Goodland.

Mrs. Henderson's mother was widowed a second time in 1946 and, in 1955, she married a Bird City farmer, Earl Burr... so, she said, I have Bird City connections!

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