

Dale

loves

Eris



DURING THEIR COURTSHIP, Dale and Eris posed for a picture in 1945.

# Romance still going strong

Couple celebrates almost 60 years of married life together

By MARY LOU OLSON

Dale Young said it was "love at first sight" for him when, as a young airman, he met Eris Wenger of Oberlin at the bowling alley in McCook on Sept. 23, 1945.

A native of Emleto, Pa., he graduated from high school in June 1942 and enlisted the following month in the Army Air Force. After basic training and schooling, as a staff sergeant, he was chosen as a flight engineer for the first crew on a B-29.

He was held to instruct other crews, but eventually released to a Bomb Group and sent to the McCook Army Air Base in 1945 to pick up planes to go to the Pacific island of Saipan. The war ended before they were organized, he said, so he never left.

While stationed in McCook, he said he met Eris after he and some of his buddies walked into a small bowling alley and a group of girls invited them to join them for a little bowling.

"That evening," he recalled, "I asked Eris if I could walk her home. When I got back to base, I was almost late to make a flight. When they asked where I'd been, I replied, 'I just met the girl I am going to marry.'"

Eris was rooming with Maxine Anderson and working at the base. She had lived in Decatur County all of her life, born and reared in the Lund district southwest of Oberlin. Her parents were Alvin and Arda Wenger.

She attended Swede Home Country School. She said that al-



THE YOUNGS (above) will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 28, 2005.

though the area is known as a Swedish community, it was originally settled by Mennonites and she remembers when she was young, some would come every year to decorate graves at the Mennonite Cemetery. Her father's sister, Lydia Wenger, married Alvin Roggy, a Mennonite, and they moved to Illinois, she recalled.

She said she enjoyed her civil service job at the air base, where at first she interviewed people for various jobs and later worked in the payroll department.

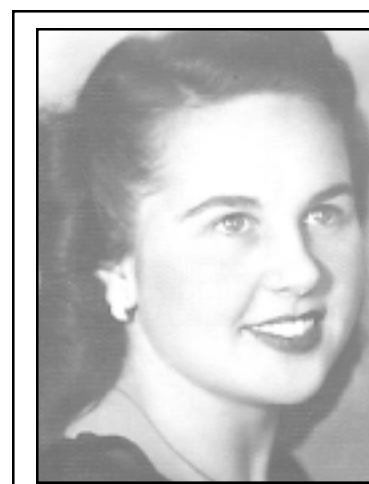
Mr. Young said the couple dated every night for three months, go-

ing out to dinner, then taking in a movie or bowling.

"Eris did decide that she needed to do some things one evening, so we canceled our date. However, before the evening was over, I called her up and said, 'We can't do this again. Being apart is too hard.'"

So three months later, on Dec. 28, 1945, they exchanged marriage vows at the Lund Covenant Church. Her grandfather, the Rev. Ed Anderson, and the church pastor, the Rev. J. O. Lonquist, officiated.

Their attendants were Maxine



Eris Wenger



Dale Young

Anderson, Fern Erikson and Marcia Earle and her brothers, Dwight and Duane Wenger, and her cousin, Joe Anderson.

After his discharge, the Youngs lived for a time in his home town in Pennsylvania, but Mrs. Young got homesick, and they decided to move back to Oberlin.

Mr. Young had done carpentry work before the war and had helped build a house for a relative when he was 14, so they decided to start Young Construction Co. in 1946.

"Lumber and supplies were hard to find after the war, so I ordered a block maker and my father-in-law and I used his water tank at the farm and built blocks for the first basement house I built in Oberlin," he said. "During the next 22 years, we enjoyed working together in the business and we built and remodeled many homes in the area, including our own."

"We always appreciated the people of Kansas, and especially Oberlin, knowing it was a wonderful place to live and raise our family," Mr. Young said.

After 22 years, Mr. Young said, he wanted another challenge and chose to go into the sporting goods wholesale/retail business, which he called Dale's Fish 'N' Fun.

Their new business was handled from their garage at first, and later expanded to a new building on U.S. 36.

"Eris was a tremendous help in both 'Mom and Pop' businesses," Mr. Young said. "It turned out to be exciting and fulfilling and we loved being around people, anticipating a good time, seeing a big fish caught by someone (on a lure I'd sold) and listening to great fish stories."

"The hunters' stories were just as much fun."

After retiring from the business

in 1983, Mr. Young said, he returned to his woodworking shop and has enjoyed every minute of it. He has made furniture for his wife, children and grandchildren.

Their family includes a son, Dr. Gary Young, an optometrist, and his wife, Nancy, of Manhattan; and two daughters, Candace Dejmal, and Terri Woolsey, whose husbands, Joe and Bob, took over Dale's Fish 'N' Fun when the Youngs retired. Both of their daughters are teachers in Oberlin. The Youngs have eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

After retiring, they spent eight winters in Arizona, traveled over the United States, Canada and Hawaii, and always looked forward to trips back to his native Pennsylvania to see the fall foliage.

They have been sweethearts throughout their married life, Mrs. Young said.

"Through our almost 60 years of marriage," she said, "we have worked closely together in our businesses and raising our family. We are both grateful for this little corner of northwest Kansas."

"Dale tells his family in Pennsylvania, 'I wouldn't trade the Oberlin area for the whole state of Pennsylvania.'"

To young couples, they said their advice would be, "Talk things out; work together; give and take; go the extra mile; never be too big to say, 'I love you' or afraid to say, 'I'm sorry.'"