



MARRIED IN HERNDON Aug. 18, 1945, Hank and Bea Wolfram (above) are shown with their attendants, Delores Wolfram (left) and Harry Grafel. The flower girl was Audrey Humes and Boyd "Butch" Grafel served as ringbearer. Frank and Velma Ward (below), lifetime residents of the Norcatatur area, on their wedding day, April 14, 1946. They recently moved to Cedar Living Center in Oberlin.

Couples celebrate 60 years of marriage

Three pairs said 'I do' in 1945-'46

By MARY LOU OLSON

Three couples at Cedar Living Center passed a milestone together, marking their 60th wedding anniversaries in the last year: Hank and Bea Wolfram, Frank and Velda Ward and Don and Marie Thomas.

The couples were honored recently with a reception in the dining room at the center.

"Although they're from different areas and backgrounds, the couples have become friends since moving to the nursing home and have been an inspiration to other residents," said Teresa Shaughnessy, activities director.

The occupations of the three men differed — farming, working for the highway department and salesman — while their wives all devoted their lives to being homemakers, wives and mothers.

The Wolframs, who actually observed their 61st anniversary last month, said they were married on Aug. 18, 1945, on his birthday, at the Evangelical and Reformed Church in Herndon. Their attendants were his sister, Delores Wolfram, and Harry Grafel.

"After the ceremony, the wedding party went to Brooks Studio at McCook to have pictures taken. The dirt was really blowing, but we made the trip there, then returned to the home of his parents, Martin and Emma (Grafel) Wolfram, for a reception and supper," Mrs. Wolfram said.

"We set up housekeeping in Traer. I farmed northwest of Traer

and my wife taught the lower grades at the Traer School," Mr. Wolfram said.

The former Beatrice McCoy, Mrs. Wolfram was the only child of Simeon and Agnes (Pirkl) McCoy. She attended Traer Grade School and the two years of high school offered in Traer at that time.

"After I started to high school in Oberlin, several of us, including Alta and Lee Lipsey, rode to school with Gordon Rathbun and we'd pick up Allen Richards on the way," she recalled, adding that she graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1941.

Her husband graduated from Herndon High School in 1938 where he played guard on the football team. He said the Herndon team was undefeated for two years while he was in high school.

Mrs. Wolfram said a special memory is when Lucy (Elson) Schissler taught her how to drive, using Orley Waldo's car.

The couple said their courtship began when he drove into the yard of her parents' home one day and asked her if she would like to go to the show with him.

"After our first date, Alice Wolfram asked me, 'Is he coming back?'" Mrs. Wolfram said. "I told her, 'I don't know; he didn't say.'" However, he did "because I needed a girl," Mr. Wolfram said.

They married after dating for 18 months. They said that entertainment after their marriage included movies, family gatherings, cards

and a battery-packed radio which they bought at Hayes Hardware in Oberlin. They attended the Traer Assembly of God Church and also enjoyed the friendship of several couples at Traer, especially Jerald and Elaine Leitner.

The couple farmed for four years and then moved to WaKeeney, when he got a job working for the state Highway Commission, now the Kansas Department of Transportation. Three years later, he was transferred to Oberlin and they have lived here since.

Their family includes a son, Larry and his wife, Sandra, and a daughter, Connie, who is married to Curtis Meixner. They have five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

They said, "We attribute our successful marriage to the Lord and the goodness of God."

They moved to Cedar Living Center eight years ago.

The courtship of Frank and Velda Ward began after he returned home from serving with the Air Force in World War II.

"She was working in the bank at Norcatatur and I was operating Ward's Produce in Norcatatur when we started dating," Mr. Ward said.

He said he bought chickens, cream and eggs from farmers, who brought their produce to town, to sell so they could buy groceries.

"During those years, Norcatatur was a busy little town," he said. "Everyone came to town on Saturday night, when a drawing was held for money, and many did their trading



and attended the picture show."

Mrs. Ward, the former Velda Fullerton, was born north of Norcatatur near the Long Branch School. Her parents were Hiram and Bertha (Crabill) Fullerton. She said she walked to and from country school every day.

"I graduated from Norcatatur Rural High School in 1943," she added.

Her husband, the only child of Earl and Alta (Nelson) Ward, was reared on a farm southeast of Norcatatur. He graduated in 1935 from Norcatatur High School, then attended Barnes Business College in Denver.

"We were both only children, so were spoiled brats," Mrs. Ward said.

They were married on April 14, 1946, at the Norcatatur Methodist Church parsonage by the Rev. Berg. The couple later moved to the Ward farm, where they farmed until retiring and moving to Norcatatur in 1980.

"We were kept busy with farming, cattle, butchering, gardening, canning and other farm-related chores," they said.

Both agreed that times have changed a lot.

"Now so many just live together and few stick it out," they said. "The sad part is that since most women work, kids have no one to come home to."

Their son Leslie and his wife Lynn and family now live and farm on the home place. Their daughter, Wava Reames, lives in Norcatatur. The Wards have three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Their advice to young couples contemplating marriage: "Don't get mad and stay mad."

The couple moved to Cedar Living Center this summer after he was hospitalized with pneumonia.

Don and Marie Thomas moved to Cedar Living Center from Goodland nine years ago to be near their son and family, Dennis and Kaylene Thomas. Their son works for Prairie Land Electric.

Mr. Thomas said they lived in Salina before transferring to Goodland when he sold Nobel Foods.

He said he was drafted into the U.S. Navy during World War II and served in Okinawa. After his discharge he returned to Salina.

"While I was in the Navy, Marie wrote to me often and we started

dating right after I returned home. I thought she was awful cute," he said. "She was a real good dancer and she tried hard to teach me how. We also enjoyed going to the movies."

"We got married by a justice of the peace two weeks after my discharge on Aug. 5, 1946," Mr. Thomas recalled. "Our attendants were my brother Jim and his wife Darlene of Wichita."

Mr. Thomas said his father died when he was young and he helped while his mother did whatever she could to help raise him and his two brothers and a sister.

"During the depression, I remember going to bed hungry many times," he said.

They have another son, Don Jr., who runs a car repair shop in Montana. Mr. Thomas said that he didn't get his mechanical ability from him, since the only thing he knows about a car is to turn the key on and go."

The Thomases have five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

"I attribute our many years of marriage to my wife's patience," Mr. Thomas said.



HANK AND BEA WOLFRAM (above) when they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 18, 1995. Don and Marie Thomas (left) marked their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 5. Norcatatur natives Frank and Velda Ward (right) observed their 50th wedding anniversary in 1996.

