

Ray L. Ferry, 97

Feb. 18, 1903 – Aug. 28, 2000

IRWIN—Ray Lavern Ferry was born near Kirkman, Feb. 18, 1903. He was the oldest of four children born to Oliver D. and Della (DeBond) Ferry. He received his education in Kirkman country schools, completing the eighth grade. He farmed with his father, and was the area blacksmith and repairman for the neighbors.

Feb. 23, 1923, he married Ruby Petersen in Harlan. To this union four children were born. He worked as a hired hand for Glen Best near Tennant. In 1930, Ray and Ruby started farming on their own, renting farms in Shelby County. They purchased a farm in 1942, southeast of Irwin, where they lived for the next 54 years. For 25 years he was a Cargill Seed dealer. In 1996, they moved to the Manilla Manor. He has always liked music and he played drums in an orchestra in the early 20's. In his youth, he and other young men played at barn dances. He played violin, accordion, harmonica and drums. He played in the Irwin Community Senior Citizen Kitchen Band and played with a small group of musicians continuing to play at the Manor for the residents. He was one of the first in Shelby County to use contour farming. He was recognized for his efforts by receiving the Shelby County Conservation Award in 1998. He was a member of Shelby County Farm Bureau serving on the board as treasurer. He was township director and clerk for more than 20 years. He served as country school director. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Irwin Senior Center, serving as treasurer for many years. He died Aug. 28, 2000, at Myrtue Memorial Hospital at age 97 years, six months and 10 days.

He was preceded in death by his parents; infant daughter, Brenda Gale; and brothers, Virgil and Victor. He is survived by his wife, Ruby, of Manilla Manor; his children, Betty (Don) Zemanek of Cincinnati, OH; Donald Ferry (Jean) of Irwin; Patricia L. (Peter) Steenhusen of Irwin and Richard Ferry (Julienne) of Harlan; 12 grandchildren; 30 great grandchildren; five great great grandchildren; one sister, Wilma Andersen of Harlan; and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Aug. 30, 2000, at Pauley Funeral Home with Marty Burgus officiating. Burial was in the Rose Hill Cemetery, Kirkman, with Janie Maull, Lori Rankin, Lana Leuschen, Susan Holloway, Becky Rademacher and Richelle Richardson honorary casket bearers. Casket bearers were Lee Ferry, Brandt Ferry, Roderick Ferry, James Zemanek, Kirk Steenhusen and Jeffery Zemanek.

