

Edith K. Nelson, 98

Aug. 22, 1902 - Sept. 4, 2000



HARLAN - Edith Kirstine Espersen Nelson was born Aug. 22, 1902, to Julianne (Claussen) and Andreas Espersen on the island of Bornholm, Denmark, south of Sweden in the Baltic Sea. At age two, she moved to Aarhus, Denmark. She was baptized into the Baptist faith on Easter Sunday, 1916. As a youth, she worked as a childcare provider. One of 16 brothers and sisters, she was persuaded at age 18 by her brother, Andreas (Andy), to immigrate to the United States. At the time, Andy was residing in Des Moines. Anxious to be a part of her new environment and desirous of learning English, she worked as a maid during the day and attended school at night. Later, she attended beauty school. She became acquainted with a Harlan area family and was eventually invited to their home. During one of her visits to Harlan, she met Marshall Nelson. She eventually accepted a job at a Harlan beauty salon making her home in the salon owner's home.

Marshall and Edith were married March 24, 1926, at Newell, by her brother, Rev. Andy Espersen. To this union three children were born.-Edith traveled to Denmark in 1931, with four-year-old Judy and a friend, Edith had made in Harlan. Edith's mother died in 1932 and her father in 1937. Edith and Marshall lived with his parents for a brief period of time near Cuppy's Grove. Then, they resided on a nearby 80 acre farm, later making their home on the John P. and Dorothea Nelson farm, and then, for three years, on a farm near Kirkman, eventually, returning to the farm at Cuppy's Grove. Marshall's parents moved to Harlan, but were not content with their new surroundings prompting Marshall and Edith to convert a portion of their six bedroom home to an apartment for the Senior Nelsons. Edith was a caregiver to her bedfast mother-in-law. In 1953, Marshall and Edith sold their farm and purchased a home across from Potter Park in Harlan, but later, purchased the John Dunn farm near Altamont Baptist Church in the Cuppy's Grove area. The couple then relocated to an apartment in Harlan, then a mobile home on the south edge of Harlan, and eventually became residents of Elm Crest Retirement Community. She was a member of the Happy Home Club and the Altamont Baptist Women's Church Circle. She died Sept. 4, 2000, at Elm Crest Retirement Community at age 98 years and 13 days.

In addition to her parents and her brothers and sisters, she was preceded in death by her daughter, Nancy in 1996. She is survived by her husband, Marshall Nelson of Harlan; her children, Judy (Bob) McConkie of Jefferson and Jerry Nelson (Janet) of Des Moines; nine grandchildren; 16 great grandchildren and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Sept. 7, 2000, at Pauley Funeral Home with Rev. Dr. David W. Erickson officiating. Burial was in Cuppy's Grove Cemetery near Harlan, with Ken Peters, John W. Knudson, Ronald Lee, Leo Nielsen, Jack Messenger, John A. Lee, James L. Klindt and Ralph Klindt casket bearers.