

Esther Wilcox Jacobs

April 2, 1916 – April 4, 2011



Esther at the counter,
Maxon's Soda Fountain

Esther was born in 1916 on a farm near Kenesaw and walked one mile to and from a country school from first through eighth grade, regardless of the weather. She drove a horse and buggy to secondary school and then graduated from Kenesaw High in 1934.

Following graduation she worked for a widower with three children-keeping house, doing the laundry and cooking all of the meals for the family and harvesters for \$2.50 a week. She then worked in Shelton for \$10 a week-considered good pay for the 1930s.

Esther moved in 1936 to Cheyenne Wyo., and worked at the Shy Ann restaurant. J.H. "Jake" Jacobs, a Nebraska resident, had followed her to Cheyenne from Nebraska, and they married in July of that year. They decided to return to Nebraska and hitchhiked because they had no money for transportation.

The couple farmed north of Wood River, where they raised potatoes. In 1950 they purchased a resident at the west edge of Wood River.

A family member described her as a strong, independent woman who "took care of things herself doing painting, wallpapering, varnishing and helping her husband farm potatoes. She loved plants and gardening and prided herself on not having a lot of weeds, said her daughter, Lee Ann Eliakis. "She was the champion weed puller of Wood River. She was a great lady."

Esther worked at the ordnance plant near Grand Island during the Korean War from 1951 to 1956 and then for the Maxon Drug Store in Wood River from 1956 to 1964.

She was an active member of St. George Orthodox Christian Church in Kearney.

Esther died April 4th, 2011 at the home of her daughter in Las Vegas. Several members gathered there from several states to celebrate her 95th birthday on April 2.

there from several sites to celebrate her 95 Survivors include one brother, C.E. Wilcox of Nebraska, two daughters, Arla Beth (Leo) Gehle of Wood River and Lee Ann (Varthie) Eliakis of Las Vegas; grandchildren Shelly Gehle, Kevin Gehle and John Eliakis, great-grandchildren Kayla Gehle and Corbin Gehle; and many nieces and nephews.

Part of the memorials for Esther was to the Wood River Community Centennial Foundation to establish a named fund in her honor. The funds were transferred to the Lewetta Russell Scholarship Fund for Scholarships to be awarded to Wood River Rural High Senior graduates.

(Taken from Esther's obituary, the story of her life that she wrote)