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Kleppinger Funeral Home

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Marjorie Elizabeth Wheeler – Jewell, KS

Marjorie Elizabeth Wheeler, 85, passed away December 24, 2011 at Hilltop Lodge in Beloit, KS. Marjorie was born November 16, 1926 in a cabin that rested in the shadows of the “Flat Tops”, part of the Rocky Mountains, near Toponas, Colorado. She was the first of three children born to Mary and Kenneth Farrington. The first weeks of her life were spent in the bread warming box above the wood burning cook stove. Marjorie was raised a ranch girl, moving cattle by horseback and feeding in the winter months with a team drawn hay sled. For recreation, she explored the mountains by horseback, read books, snow skied, and gardened.

Marjorie met Orell Wheeler, 16 years her senior, at a country dance. Orell was the only guy with a car, so he could take all the girls to the dances. They were married July 1, 1949. To this union they each brought a child from previous marriages. Orells’ daughter, Dolores was twelve years old and Marjorie had a two year old daughter, Penny. Soon after their wedding two nieces, 13 and 14 years old came to live with them. Marjorie was 22 years old, newly married, and already raising a toddler and 3 teenagers. So began her lifelong passion of caring for children. Marjorie and Orell had two daughters, Deborah and Jacque. When Jacque was 6 years old, they became a licensed Foster Group Home for mostly teenagers. They took in children from 1961 to 2002, when Marjorie was 76 years old and Orell had already gone to be with the Lord. Out of the many numerous children they raised, including nieces, nephews, and grandchildren, they adopted three children, Terrance, Dan and Patricia.

Marjorie lived on a working cattle ranch with Orell in the Steamboat Springs area of Colorado. In 1978, they moved to a small place outside of Jewell, KS to live closer to the oldest daughter and her children. The foster children came with them from Colorado, and they continued to take in children from Kansas. Marjorie lived in the country and loved all animals, but especially cats and dogs. For extra money in her later years, she raised registered cats and dogs having up to 50 breeding cats at one time.

After Orell passed away, Marjorie continued to lead Bible Studies and worked as the librarian for a while until her health failed in 2006.

Marjorie is preceded in death by a daughter, Dolores. She is survived by 6 children, 21 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 9 great-great grandchildren.

Memorial services will be Friday, December 30th at 11:00 a.m. in the Jewell Christian Church. Memorials may be given to Solomon Valley Hospice or Hilltop Lodge. There will be NO visitation. Kleppinger Funeral Home, 409 Broadway, Jewell, KS 66949 is handling the arrangements. Graveside services in Yampa, Colorado will be at a later date.