

Friends of Olive

Olive Marie Hopkins grew up in Joplin, Missouri. Her first marriage to Sheriff Thomas ended in tragedy when the sheriff was shot and killed on a Sunday morning after church. Sadly, their two little children also died from diphtheria.

In 1903 her friend, Dr. Robert Woods who she had known from his former medical practice in Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas and who had emigrated to Alberta, came down to visit and ended up bringing Olive to Alberta. After getting off the train depot in Leduc, they went over to the Methodist Rectory where they were married by Reverend Scott.

The next five years were spent on the homestead at Strawberry Creek near Telfordville where Olive worked side by side with her husband raising cattle. Their first child, Edwin, was born on the homestead in 1905.

When Dr. Woods obtained his license for practicing medicine in Alberta, the family moved into the town of Leduc. Their second child, Marion, was born in 1915.

Olive enjoyed her role as wife, mother, and eventually as a grandmother to Edwin's girls and Marion's triplets. However, as a doctor's wife she was sometimes squeamish if she was needed to help with medical emergencies as she hated the sight of blood.

Olive was an excellent cook and enjoyed cooking her favourite American foods – soups, stews, pies, tarts, etc. She was a wonderful hostess to their many friends from the country as well as from town. The "coffee pot was always on".

As well, Olive "received once a month" when ladies of town were invited to come to an elegant tea – leaving their calling cards. In 1913 she received on the fourth Wednesday of each month. This tradition is commemorated in the museum with our Teas three times a year. (See Upcoming Events)

Dr. and Mrs. Woods were a well admired couple in the community. Olive belonged to the Women's Institute, the Church Ladies Group, and the Lady Moose, taking her turn at hosting meetings. In 1932 Dr. and Mrs. Woods were asked to lead the Grand March at the opening of the Calmar Hall at which 700 people attended.

Olive, like many other pioneer women enjoyed sewing for her family and working on the traditional handiwork of the time. She loved getting together with friends at quilting parties.

As well, Olive enjoyed music. Olive played the piano and sang in the church choir. She loved reading and there were always numerous books, magazines, and newspapers in their home. They were also fortunate to have a radio and a gramophone.

An adventuresome lady, she learned to drive a car and enjoyed going for drives with her good friends, Mrs. Lund and their girls.

Becoming a widow again in 1936, Olive made the decision to find love and companionship once again when she married Mr. William McGregor.

References:

The Leduc Representative

Marion Woods Maygard