

Esther Epperson Barr passed away Monday, April 28, 2008 at Pioneer Place, Tacoma, WA. She moved there from Bozeman, MT as she struggled with Alzheimer's disease.

Esther was born on November 3, 1917 in Billings Montana to Jesse and Henrietta (Suitor) Epperson. Her father was a farmer; her mother was a school teacher until she married Jesse. Esther was the oldest of three girls. The family sold the farm in Billings to move to California when Esther was in about the sixth grade. What they found in California was not what was expected, so they immediately returned to Montana and settled on a small farm in Edgar, Montana. Esther graduated from high school, then went to Eastern Montana Normal School, and completed a two year program in the late 1930's to become a teacher.

It was during her time in high school that Esther began writing to a pen-pal, Irene, in England. They began writing when both were in school, and have continued to write through the times when both married, had families, went through World War II, the passing of both their husbands, and other lifetime events. Esther has visited Irene in England on three different occasions and Irene visited here twice.

Esther taught school for a number of years in small rural schools in south central Montana. She married David Leroy Barr on October 11, 1940. The two knew each other in school at Edgar. She left her teaching position at that time. During World War II she moved to California while Leroy was stationed there. While living there they had a son, Duane.

Esther returned to Edgar when Leroy went into the Navy. After WWII they settled in Edgar where their daughter, Dianne was born. During the years following, Esther worked and volunteered in the community in several ways. She worked part-time or as needed as a substitute teacher for the school, as a postal worker at the post office/drug store, and as a clerk at the hardware store. She also volunteered and was active in church and community events. Later she became a regular part-time employee at the post office, where she worked until the late 1960's, and retired from that position.

Esther was an organizer. In 1964 she organized, with the help of several volunteers, the first All-Class reunion for the Edgar high school. This was a major accomplishment for her.

In the late 1960's until the early 1980's, Esther and Leroy lived in Billings and Bozeman Montana to follow Leroy's work. Leroy retired in 1981 and they stayed in Bozeman. Leroy passed away in 1982. Esther remained in Bozeman until August of 2003.

In the years in Bozeman, Esther was active in several volunteer projects, various boards, and community groups. This included the Senior Citizens Center, Chamber of Commerce information booth, a city advisory council, and the local garden club. She was president of the garden club for one year. She traveled with senior citizens groups at various times to China, New Zealand, Alaska, Hawaii, Scandinavia, New England, and of course, England, to see her pen-pal/friend.

Hobbies she has enjoyed at various times include ceramics, gardening, and water color and oil painting.

Survivors include her daughter, Dianne (John) Lattimer of Tacoma, WA; son, Duane Barr of Center Island, WA; granddaughter, Lorre (Doyle) Meyers; grandson, Duane Barr II; great granddaughter, Emma Barr all of Bothell, WA and several nieces and a nephew.

Funeral services will be held at 9:30 am, Saturday at Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service. Interment will follow at 2 pm in Rockvale Cemetery south of Laurel. Should friends desire, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society or to the Alzheimer's Association. Funeral arrangements are in the care of Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service.

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