



**MOTHER'S DAY WISHES** will be extended today to Mrs. J. E. Ely, 104 Ash, who is framed by her five living children. Mrs. Ely will celebrate her 98th birthday May 15. Her children from left are Marion, Duncan Rt. 2; C. C. of Hastings; Doc, the youngest child of Velma; W. M. of Hastings, and Mrs. W. H. Noble, the

oldest child of Cloo Springs. Mrs. Noble is now making her home with her mother. Mrs. Ely, still in good health for her age, walks to church with a little assistance, and has received a corsage as oldest mother of Immanuel Baptist Church for a good many years now.  
—Staff Photo by Pee Wee Cary

## Duties, Rewards of Motherhood Many In Life of Mrs. Ely, State Pioneer

By JANEIL McLAIN

"M" is a good choice for the beginning of mother. It can represent "many" or "multitude" in the duties and rewards that accompany motherhood.

Five days from today, Mrs. J. E. Ely will celebrate her 98th birthday and a good many of these years have been filled with a multitude of duties being the mother of 10 children, five still living.

Effie May Stahl was born May 15, 1872, to the late Mr. and Mrs. Francis Marion Stahl in Shawnee County, Auburn, Kan., and married James E. Ely Dec. 25, 1889. She married in the home of her parents where she was born.

The couple made the two-week journey from Topeka, Kan., in a covered wagon when the Cherokee Strip was opened. The Elys homesteaded and cleared 160 acres of land in what was later to be Major County in north central Oklahoma.

Their first home in Oklahoma was a dugout - type house logged up with cedar logs. Mrs. Ely brought everlasting yeast in that covered wagon and kept it going for over 70 years, baking all her family's bread and some for neighbors.

In 1912, the Elys moved to Artesia, N.M., and then came to Stephens County locating on a farm near Velma. Four years later, they bought a

a beauty shop was but fortunate she didn't have to worry about it anyway.

She can also remember seeing her first automobile, remarking, "Wonder what that was that didn't have horses hooked up to it?"

In response to what life was like in those days, Mrs. Ely said she didn't mind it, that a person just did what was required. Everyone helped and worked with each person having a job to do. She feels the reason her children are good workers now reflects back to their early training.

The five living children are C. C. and W. M. of Hastings; Marion, Duncan Rt. 2; Doc of Vel-

years together.

Mrs. Ely's father, F. M. Stahl, served as chief of police in Topeka, Kan., for eight years and worked with Carry Nation, famous for smashing saloons with her hatchet.

One of Mrs. Ely's proudest possessions hangs in her living room. It is a needlepoint picture done by Mrs. Susanna Virginia Ely in 1869.

The art work done in 1860 during the Civil War, was done in a Catholic convent where Mrs. Susanna Ely was put for safe keeping during the war. The picture is based on scripture from Exodus 2:11 when Moses identified himself with Israel.

Yes, times have changed...

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In 1912, the Elys moved to Artesia, N.M., and then came to Stephens County locating on a farm near Velma. Four years later, they bought a farm eight miles northwest of Duncan in the Central High Community. Mr. Ely developed a registered herd of Jersey cattle and the family prospered from sales of vegetables, butter and eggs. Mrs. Ely said they sold between 20 and 30 pounds of butter twice weekly. Since ice wasn't available, the butter was kept cool in the cistern.

Long-time friends say the Ely home throughout the years was always the center of attraction for young people in their community. It became a custom for friends to gather at the Ely home for parties, spiced with the helpings of Mrs. Ely's taffy.

Mrs. Ely, who has natural curly hair, said back in the early days, she didn't know what

a beauty shop was but fortunate she didn't have to worry about it anyway.

She can also remember seeing her first automobile, remarking, "Wonder what that was that didn't have horses hooked up to it?"

In response to what life was like in those days, Mrs. Ely said she didn't mind it, that a person just did what was required. Everyone helped and worked with each person having a job to do. She feels the reason her children are good workers now reflects back to their early training.

The five living children are C. C. and W. M. of Hastings; Marion, Duncan Rt. 2; Doc of Velma, the youngest child, and Mrs. W. H. Noble of Cleo Springs who is oldest and now living with her mother to help care for her.

Deceased children of the couple are John C.; Eugene Field; Susan Esther Phillips; Francis William and Lloyd Lewis.

Mrs. Ely is a charter member of Immanuel Baptist Church here and recalled that Mr. Ely dug up the first shovel of dirt for the first Immanuel Baptist Church here. That church building has since been torn down and replaced with new structures. She has been honored as the oldest mother in the church for a good many years now.

The Elys retired in 1945, moving to 104 Oak 25 years ago.

Sept. 12, 1957, the Elys were named Oklahoma Farm Family of the Year. The honor came on Mr. Ely's 90th birthday. At the time of Mr. Ely's death in 1959, the couple had spent 69

years together.

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Yes, times have changed tremendously during these 97 plus years of Mrs. Ely's life. One of the most visible signs could be from the shoe-top length dress worn in those days by the women and girls to the minis worn today. Fashion forecasters says, watch out the midi and maxi will have their day again, so Mrs. Ely may see the hemlines fall to the level she wore a good many years ago.

Another thing that hasn't changed is grandchildren of which grandparents are so proud. Mrs. Ely has 23 grandchildren, 69 great-grandchildren and 16 great-great-grandchildren to talk about.

It is true that time changes a lot of things, but one thing it doesn't change is a mother. And Mrs. Ely has been revered as a mother for a good many years. She can look back over her life with a good deal of pleasure. Happy Mother's Day, Mrs. Ely.