



Era Mae Ann Lawrence

SEP 8, 1928 - JAN 27, 2016



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Life Celebration of Era Mae Parker Lawrence Era Mae Ann Lawrence, age 87 years old, passed from this life, January 27, 2016, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Era Lawrence was born in Gravelly, Arkansas, in 1928, just in time to grow up in the Great Depression. She was the second child born to Frank and Lena Yates Parker. Her family lines traced back to Tennessee and North Carolina. She had one older brother, Glyndell Parker, would die of a ruptured appendix and measles in the family home when he was 7 years old. The next youngest child was Charles Weldon “Dick” Parker and a sister, Wilma Louise “Lou” Parker. Dick would marry Euel Deane Payne and Lou would marry Harold Gillum, all of whom grew up in the LaFource Valley of Yell County, Arkansas. All are now deceased except for Aunt Lou who still lives in that beautiful valley at Rover, Arkansas. Their father, Frank, worked at farming and other odd jobs to make ends meet which was very, very hard in the Depression. As he worked, his wife Lena and and his mother, Christenia Rhoades Parker, kept the house in order; cooked, cleaned, quilted, canned food, and helped maintained harmony and discipline. Although, both Lena and Christenia were too kind-hearted to ever mete out very much punishment to Frank & Lena’s children. It was said that our great grandmother Christenia, who had been born in 1864 In North Carolina while her father was away in the Civil War, never raised her hand or her voice at the children. She also had several beehives and while her grandchildren watched, she would harvest the honey from the combs by hand, using only a smoker to keep angry bees away. Her overall personage was admired and respected by family and friends and her influence was what Era and her siblings grew up under. The home was so welcoming that friends and extended family would walk or come by wagon just to visit the Parker home, usually on Sunday’s after church. And while they did not have a lot of extra food, the guests were always feed with canned peaches or corn, perhaps green beans with potatoes and gravy and some type of bread Lena or



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Christenia made that morning.. Life was hard in the 1930's and early 40's, and when the Depression ended around 1938/1939, World War II loomed just around the corner. While jobs opened up across the country, down in the LaFourche Valley, it was still tough going. So much so that the family lost their beautiful farm that sat on a hill with a view of the the Boston Mountains, due to unpaid property taxes ... and no one in the valley was able to help them save it. It was a loss the family felt for the rest of their lives. They moved from rent house to rent house and one was destroyed by a tornado that scattered their home all over the mountainside. They not only lost their home, furniture and food, but also the only known photographs of Frank's father and Christenia's husband, James Parker, who died when Franks was around 5 years old as well as other old family photos and their bibles except for one which was Christenia's old Rhoades family bible.. Another aspect the family was involved in during the late 1930's to early 1940's, was driving to California with extended family and friends, to pick fruit and vegetables in the fields of Northern California. Photographs survive showing them riding in the back of a truck with mattresses tied down for the trip from Arkansas. If you have ever seen the movie "The Grapes of Wrath", you will see exactly what it was like to Era and her family to travel from Oklahoma and Arkansas to California in the back of a truck looking for seasonal work. Their work in the fields or fruit cannery, or separating potatoes from good to bad, was long and hard. What money they made was spent on their living costs and what was left over, tucked away to take back to Arkansas when the picking season was over, hoping it would get them through the winter. They were proud "Arkies" as Californians derisively called them, struggling to survive during hard times. And with the exception of their land taxes that cost them their home, they made it – even though many meals consisted of only some fruit or vegetables as they could not afford to buy meat. Era's mother and grandmother taught her how to sew and she took to it like a duck to water. She made dresses and quilts all by hand thanks to those long hours of training, with her mother and grandmother. The love she developed for her sewing evolved later in life to one of her hobbies; quilt making, making cloth rabbits, geese and more- even making school shirts for her son. Her quilts were loved by many and before so many poorly made quilts began being imported from China,



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she sold many of her quilt creations in craft stores in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and Branson, Missouri, and had she had special orders for quilts from many of the folks that purchased one of her quilts at a shop up in the Ozarks. Some of the early quilts she made with her mother and grandmother during and after the Great depression, are still in family hands and the backings were made from old cotton flour sacks. As a side note, the flour company's were aware that people were using the old flour sacks for quilt backings and clothes, so the company's started making their sacks out of decorative flower prints so that the dresses that were made resembled store bought dresses instead of old flour sacks. Era's daughter, Joan, had many of these flour sack dresses when she was a small child. One of Era's aunt's, Claudie Yates, married a man named Cecil Lawrence and moved to the Webber Falls area of Oklahoma. Era would travel with her mother and/or her maternal grandfather Andrew Yates. to Cecil and Claudie's home and would pick cotton for much needed money in the summer months. On one of these trips, she met Cecil's youngest brother, Glenn Lawrence, while they were all picking cotton. A romance bloomed and on November 16, 1945, they were married. Glenn had nothing to bring to the marriage except a strong back and a pair of sinewy muscled arms who would work at whatever he could to start a life with his wife. He worked a great deal in the sawmills in the Lafource Valley that were operating during and after the end of the war. In February of 1947, Era gave birth to a daughter they named Joan who was born in Waldron, Arkansas. Joan was showered with love by all of the family as she was the first grandchild to Frank and Lena and first niece to Dick and Lou. In 1955, a second child, and first natural born "Okie" (and a surprise for them) was born in Tulsa, a son they named Rickey. Glenn, who had came from a large family of six brothers and one sister, and he wanted 5 kids ... but Era proclaimed that two was plenty! The family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma in the early 1950's as word had been received that there were good jobs available there. Glenn continued to work at whatever he could do while he looked for a good job he could have for a career. During this time, he was hired by McDonnell-Douglas, working for them for 13 years. But after years and years of working and being laid off every summer, Glenn landed work at American Airlines as a mechanic in 1963 and within a few years, for the first time in his and Era's live's, they were



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living comfortably and able to save for a new car (a 1964 Chevrolet Impala) a new and much better home in 1977 and to save money towards their retirement years. It was a long way from picking cotton by hand in the hot summer sun. They also joined Calvary Baptist Church in 1964 and where members there the rest of their lives. Daughter Joan would marry and have two children, Gianna Mae and Jarrod Huntley. Rick too, would marry and he and his wife would have a son, David Joe Lawrence. Glenn died in 1996 of diabetes and heart disease while Era lived until last Wednesday, January 27, when she passed away peacefully in her sleep from Alzheimer's Disease. They are buried next to each other at Floral Haven Cemetery, Tulsa, Oklahoma. What many historians call "the greatest generation" of American history, due to the trials and tribulations they lived through and their tenacity to survive, is quickly leaving us. But the stories and legacy they left behind them are the stories of America and what made America great – and long should they be remembered. We are proud of our parents for all they overcame and achieved in their lives. We love and miss you! Era Mae Ann will be dearly missed by her daughter Joan Carolyn Lawrence and son Rickey Glenn Lawrence and wife Candy; grandchildren Jared Paul Huntley, and David Joe Lawrence and wife Jennifer; great-grandchildren Elizabeth Ann Moffatt, Caitlin Marie Moffatt, William Rolan Moffatt, Tyler Britt Lawrence, Taylor Nicole Holland, Madison Ashlee Graham, Kinzley Renae and Cassidy Leanne; sister Louise Gillum and host of nieces and nephews. Era Mae Ann is preceded in death by her parents; husband Glenn Lawrence; granddaughter Gianna Mae Huntley-Moffatt; great-granddaughter Faith Rickelle Lawrence; sister Vivian Parker; and brothers Charles Parker Glyndel Parker. Visitation will be held 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Thursday, January 28, 2016, at the Floral Haven Funeral Home Visitation Room, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. A celebration of life funeral ceremony will be held 12:30 p.m., Friday, January 29, 2016, at the Floral Haven Funeral Home Chapel, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Era Mae Ann's name and honor to the Alzheimer's Association.



Tribute Wall

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PG

Pam Parker Grimes posted:

Lit a candle in memory of Era Mae Ann Lawrence

February 3 at 10:39 AM

TF

The Gillum Family posted:

Aunt Mae will be missed by all who knew her. She was always kind, warm, friendly, and generous. She loved her family and friends and we will never forget her!

January 29 at 1:15 PM

SC

Sara Claytor posted:

Sent a gift in memory of Era Mae Ann Lawrence

January 28 at 9:35 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Era by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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