

10. Retirement

In 1968 Earl retired from Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company after 47 years of service, and he was granted a life membership in the Telephone Pioneers of America. He spent the two semesters in 1969 with Jo in Fresno, while she taught, but there he lacked a workshop and he also missed his orchard. In Jo's continued teaching in California, Earl remained behind in Colorado where he could occupy himself more productively. Jo came home weekends as she was able.

By 1973 it became evident that Earl's health was gradually failing due to his emphysema. Though Jo was reluctant to leave her Grand Junction home and her friends, it was decided that a move closer to family could be beneficial. Jo and Earl chose Clovis, New Mexico where Marty, Ellen Claire and family lived. By this time Marty and E.C. had had their last child, Daniel, born August 28, 1970. He was a three-year-old at the time of Jo and Earl's move. The other children, Marty, born December 11, 1959 was already a teenager. Jo Ellen, born March 31, 1962 was now 11 and John Duncan, born January 14, 1966 was 7 years old. For Jo and Earl, who had been empty-nesters for quite a few years, it was a welcome re-entry into a noisy but happy family life.

A new home was designed and built for Jo and Earl by Marty and E.C. on the number six fairway of the golf course of Colonial Park Country Club (now Chaparral Country Club). Their new address was 1718 Fairway Terrace where some lovely hand-carved twist posts graced their front and rear porticos. The posts were carved at Ojo Caliente, a small town in northern New Mexico.

The Shaeffers were welcomed into the Clovis community with open arms. Not long after their arrival the following appeared in the Clovis-Portales Arts Council newsletter:

If you have the opportunity to hear, or visit with, Jo Shaeffer, do not pass it up. Mrs. Shaeffer, mother-in-law of our E.C. Shaeffer, and her husband have recently retired to Clovis. But retiring is the wrong word as she continues her love of people and life and expresses it as she did recently with a book review for the Friends of the Library. It was truly wonderful and we that were there thank her.



Nov. 11 '73
Clovis News Journal

Jo Shaeffer To Give Book Review At Upcoming Friends Of Clovis - Carver Public Library Meet

"My name is Helen Jo Shaeffer, but do please call me Jo." Her eyes sparkled and the laugh crinkles gathered as this exceptional lady discussed children and schools and book reviews.

The Shaeffers are brand new to Clovis. He recently retired from the Mountain Bell Telephone system, and she has been a prominent educational innovator. Their home for many years was a peach orchard in Grand Junction, Colo.

Before their bags were unpacked, Jo went hunting for the local library, which she found, together with the Friends of the Library. The Friends have found in her an experienced reviewer of books, and are very pleased to invite the people of Clovis to their meeting on Thursday night, Nov. 15 at the Clovis Woman's Club, to meet this dynamic woman. Mrs. Shaeffer will be reviewing "Joppa Door" by Hope Williams Sykes.

Joe Shaeffer is not just a book reviewer. "I love children," she said, as she told how she became a teacher. When her youngest son reached eighteen, Jo went to college to obtain her teaching credential. She was asked to take over a small primary school in Grand Junction, which became the springboard for a system now used throughout the State of Colorado. That system is called the non-graded school.

Over the years she has obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees, and is now working on her doctorate. She has taught, which is her first love, and been an administrator in several schools in Colorado. She even went to California to teach at Fresno State University. In her spare time she likes to cook, sew and do macrame.

Asked about the kind of book reviewing she does, she said, "Narrative, and please don't ask me what it is. Just come and hear."

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Jo Shaeffer Presents Review

Mrs. Jo Shaeffer (seated) is a newcomer to Clovis and to the Friends of Clovis - Carver Public Library. She has had a rapid initiation into the library group, however, and she will be reviewing a book at the Friends meeting Thursday evening at the Clovis Wo-

man's Club. The book receiving Mrs. Shaeffer's attention on Thursday will be "Joppa Door" by Hope Williams Sykes and the public is encouraged to attend. Shown with Mrs. Shaeffer is Mrs. Sherra Hays, a member of the Friends. (Staff Photo)

Jo began writing her annual holiday letters at Thanksgiving time rather than at Christmas after she and Ellen Claire had a lengthy discussion on how to simplify the holiday season. The collected holiday letters were reprinted in a booklet by her granddaughter, Beth, entitled “Treasured Memories.” One, however, that was not included, had a brief draft in a holiday folder entitled, “Card Ideas.” It was entitled “The Spell of New Mexico” and a note says that it was used in 1984. It captures something of the spirit of the Southwest:

Wind blown, dry, half-barren, the Tony Hillerman landscape vaulted above us. [I have] an overwhelming warmth of feeling for the uncanny sweeps of empty space in this part of the world. [I can] see for miles in any direction. There are sunrises violent and beautiful. They are almost frightening. We see lots of men in cowboy boots. In spite of the great sense of isolation [I am] not hemmed in by traffic and people. There is so much sky and such bright skies that the great distance to the horizon gets into your soul and makes you feel big inside.

Jo joined the First Presbyterian Church and became active in the women’s circle. She was often responsible for prayer at circle meetings. She saved drafts of a number of those prayers:

Once again on this beautiful day, Father, we come to thee, a small group of Christian women to ask for thy guidance. We thank you for the presence of these kind, generous women. We ask your blessing on each one and all those not here today that are ill or distressed or weary. Lord, grant us sturdy faith and God give us deeper devotion that comes from trusting you for our tomorrows. Amen

Kind and loving Father, as we give thanks for each new day, may we reach out to thee and to each other for strength and guidance, showing love and concern for everyone. We live in our own small worlds but as we seek to show our loving concern for others may the circle of our influence widen. We pray that each day we will truly try to do something beautiful for Thee. Amen.

Once again on this beautiful fall day, Father, we come to thee, a small group of Christian women to ask for thy guidance. We thank you for the priceless company of these kind, generous women. Every one of them special—grown close friends over the years like a big dependable family. These faces—pretty and plain, young and old all alight with something lovely. We ask your blessing on each one and also for all those not here today. Give us light to guide us, courage to support us and love to unite us now and forever. Amen

Dear Father, Once again we come together in prayer and ask for the blessings of your presence within us. We pray for those ill or troubled. As we pray we still ourselves, stop our earthly tasks, quiet our thoughts and we listen for your guidance, to hear thy will. Lord, make us mindful to be thankful for all our blessings. Strengthen our faith. Guide us in our thoughts and words. These things we ask in Thy name, Amen.

When the pastor, Scott King, became the subject of unhappy debate among the parishioners, Jo added the following to one of her prayers: “...Bless our pastor. Keep him safe and well and enrich this learning experience for him...”

She later wrote a beautiful letter in his behalf which he cherished and copied to share with Jo’s family after her death:

April 26, 1985

Rev. Dick Brown
Roswell, New Mexico

Dear Dr. Brown,

I have not met you and in order to identify myself I am Mrs. Jo Schaffer and have been a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Davis, for some ten years. We moved from Colorado and California having taught for five years in the University of California Fresno commuting to our home in Colorado. I am an elder in this church.

Unlucky to my displeasure I have been told there is a small faction in our church complaining about Rev. and Mrs. Scot King. I want you to know this does not meet the approval of most members of our church where many agree with my very high regard and esteem of our pastor and his wife.

He is the most loving and caring minister I have ever known. His sermons are wonderful, inspiring and scholarly. They are always well prepared, quietly and effectively presented.

He spends much time working with the aged and infirm of all denominations in the nursing homes here. He is very highly regarded in the community as well he should be as he assumes outside activities when needed. The church has declined in membership which is

understandable when one realizes the town is not growing and the membership is made up of mostly older members. Also members from the airforce are frequently of short duration because of transfers. Consequently the simple fact of attrition is the underlying factor. There are over seventy churches in this small community, the drop in membership has not in any way been due to dissatisfaction with the Kings. There has been a small but steady growth of new members.

I constantly marvel at Scott's talent of organization. In spite of busy hours he is always perfectly organized in all things at all times.

I find after reading this over I haven't mentioned his work with the youth. Since Susan Sharpe has been here he has been relieved of this but before her arrival he spent many hours teaching confirmation classes, taking the youth on work assignments, trips, singing, camping, etc.

Last, which should have been first, the honesty and integrity of this young man is an example to inspire all of us.

If you wish to talk with me at any time please do

so

Sincerely,

Jo Shafer

1718 Fairway Terrace

Clovis, N.H.

88101

762-7828



Earl and grandsons (L-R: John Duncan Shaeffer, Martin Shaeffer III, Bo Irwin, Daniel Shaeffer, Earl Martin Shaeffer) at 1011 Fairway Terrace, Clovis, NM
1971

(Earl taught each of his grandchildren to crawl. It was fun to watch him with those babies.)

In Clovis Earl was under the care of Dr. Jim Messer, who was a good friend of Marty's. Jim took excellent care of Earl and was especially considerate during his final days. However, before the foreseeable future became fixed, Jo and Earl made a trip to the Scott & White Clinic at Temple, Texas. The prognosis was the same: pulmonary emphysema with a gradual decline and eventual death. Not only had he been a smoker, but he had used chemical sprays for his orchard and also had worked for many years splicing cable in an enclosed tent which housed noxious fumes as well.

Jo and Earl refused to give in to discouragement about the inevitable and participated as fully as possible in the various activities of the children and grandchildren in Clovis during the four years that Earl lived in Clovis. During that time they visited Houston, Texas where Bobbie Jo and family lived, and entertained guests as often as they could within reason. Earl continued to enjoy his workshop and to be useful and creative with his projects. He helped to make repairs around the house and at Marty's house as well, until he was no longer able.

On January 1st of 1975 Jo and Earl marked their Golden Wedding, 50 years since their marriage. Jo reminisced about their life together:

We lived most of our lives in Grand Junction, Colorado. In those days it was a town of about 40,000, a small agricultural community surrounded by peach orchards. For a town of this size we found it very interested in the cultural things. There were many clubs, musical groups,

very active women's groups, many churches and a junior college. Recreation consisted of bridge clubs, dancing clubs. Earl and I seldom went to a movie as we felt we couldn't afford it. We made our own fun. We had wonderful dinners with our friends where all the children were included.

Our first home there was a small rented house that cost \$35 a month. Earl worked for the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Company and made \$165 a month. I canned and canned. Living in that community where there were all kinds of wonderful fruits and vegetables made it possible to fill our shelves with fruits, jellies, pickles and vegetables. I made bread every Saturday for the week. During the week I made pie, cookies and cake. Sometimes we would buy a quarter of a beef all cut into steaks, roasts and hamburger. In our basement was a sack of potatoes and smaller sacks of onions and carrots.

Every nickel counted and we were very careful to keep within a tight budget, but we were rich in our love and togetherness. We had a small car which was used mostly for Earl to get back and forth to work.

Earl and I made our decisions together which, as I remember, never caused any insurmountable division. Political issues were discussed but not very profoundly in our family. The idea of divorce was never mentioned or contemplated. When we married it meant forever for us...

We felt very fortunate to have a job during those depression years. Most of our neighbors did not have jobs and we would try to share some with them. Whenever I baked I took a portion to them. The few clothes I had I loaned to the high-school girl next door, as she literally didn't have clothes to wear. On all sides of us two or three families moved in together in an attempt to cut expenses. They would do any little job to get enough money to put food on their tables. It was awful. Anyone living through the Great Depression never really gets over it.

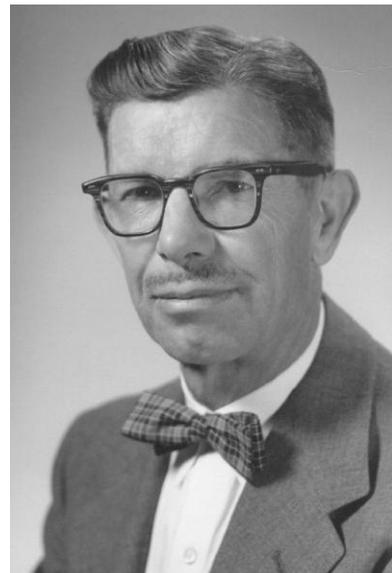
But Colorado was a happy land. It was wealthy in the sense that the land gave its people health, good education and leisure with a serene optimism about life. The wealth of Colorado traces back to two great and equal events: the discovery in 1878 at Leadville of the world's greatest silver mine, and in 1890 Cripple Creek became the world's richest gold camp. And then we lived in Grand Junction which for a time was the world's leading uranium camp.

Acknowledging Earl's anniversary gift, Jo wrote:

Earl, how beautiful the gift you made for me with your own hands—perfectly, patiently measured, pounded and painted. Earl, you always are quietly waiting for me—in Clovis—in your big chair. In Colorado you were always busy with satisfying tasks, mostly blessed common things like sawing wood for the comfort of a fireplace—for me. You've always had high standards in your handwork. The memories—the good ones, the sad ones, the tender ones, the hurting ones and the joyous ones. Entwined, we blend together in a bond so strong—life nor death can ever sever—a bond we will cherish for ever and ever.

Jo and Earl's remaining time together would be less than two years from their 50th wedding anniversary. As the time grew shorter, the family rallied around Earl to comfort him in his struggle for breath. He passed away at home on the afternoon of December 6, 1977.

“Earl had a beautiful soul—pure—really pure,” wrote Jo at a time of reflection more than two years after his passing.



The obituary in the Clovis News Journal:

Earl M. Shaeffer

Private graveside services for Earl Martin Shaeffer, 74, of 1718 Fairway Terrace, will be conducted at 3 pm Thursday at Crown Hill Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

Mr. Shaeffer died Tuesday. He was born Sept. 24, 1903 in Lincoln, Nebraska and resided many years in Colorado. He had worked for Mountain Bell Telephone for 47 years before retiring in Clovis in 1973.

Survivors include his wife, Jo, of the home; one son, Martin Shaeffer of Clovis; one daughter, Mrs. Bobbie Jo Irwin of Houston, Texas; and seven grandchildren. Memorial may be made to the First Presbyterian church in Clovis in Mr. Shaeffer's memory.

Steed-Todd funeral home is in charge of arrangements.

In the Grand Junction or Palisade, Colorado paper (not identified) the following was included:

Deaths Elsewhere

Earl M. Shaeffer, of 1718 Fairway Terrace, Clovis, N.M. died there Tuesday. Mr. Shaeffer spent 47 years with Mountain States Telephone, the last 22 as manager at the Palisade office, which included the De Beque, Collbran, and Mesa. He retired in 1968. His wife, Mrs. Jo Shaeffer, had been a teacher and school principal in District 51. She survives.

Survivors: daughter, Bobbie Jo Irwin of Houston, Texas; son, Martin Shaeffer of Clovis, NM, and seven grandchildren. Graveside services will be held Thursday at 3 pm at the Crown Hill Cemetery, Denver.

The Reverend Hespeth of Denver presided over the burial. At the time of his death, Earl and Jo had been married for 52 years. Jo thereafter had a floral offering sent to her church each December as a memorial for Earl. The First Presbyterian Church's bulletin the first Sunday of each December: "Flowers are given today by Mrs. Earl Shaeffer in loving memory of Mr. Earl Shaeffer."

Excerpts from the Memorial of the Curry County High Plains Historical Foundation publication, p. 491:

Earl M. Shaeffer was a man of quiet dignity and great depth of kindness. He was loved and respected by all who knew him...

Earl was a great outdoorsman. He loved to camp and fish. His expertise in fly fishing was rarely matched, and he could tie flies that would lure the biggest and best trout out of any Colorado stream. He spent many a Saturday afternoon tramping the remote woods and streams delighting in the beauties of nature and that unique water that only fly-fishermen come to know and love.

Earl was renowned for his beautiful peach orchard in Palisade, Colorado. During harvest time people would come from as far as Kansas to buy his big delicious Elberta peaches...

Earl's sweet and even temper was rarely provoked to anger, but when he had something important to say everyone listened! He was a pleasant companion, a patient teacher, a loyal Mason, a devoted husband and father and a truly generous man—generous with his time, his money, his talents, and generous in his judgments of life.

At his death his grandfather, John Duncan Shaeffer, wrote the following:

The death of My Grandfather

On December 6, 1977 my grandfather Earl Martin Shaeffer died. He passed away about 2:00 PM after he had woke up from a nap. My grandfather Earl Martin Shaeffer had emphysema a disease of struggling for every breath. My grandfather had smoked earlier in his life which caused this. My grandfather was 74 at the time of his death. I was only 11 that year and I was sick with a sore throat that day and stayed home from school. It was about 3 PM when my mom got home from shopping and she heard the news about my grandfather. Between 2 and 3 I was the only one home and there was about 10 phone calls for my mother and father and they were saying it was urgent. My grandfather was the father of my father. And my dad really felt bad. When I first heard the news I couldn't believe it, but I tried to keep my mind off of it. My grandfather was sick for about one year until he died.

EARL MARTIN SHAEFFER

^{BORN}
SEPTEMBER 24, 1903

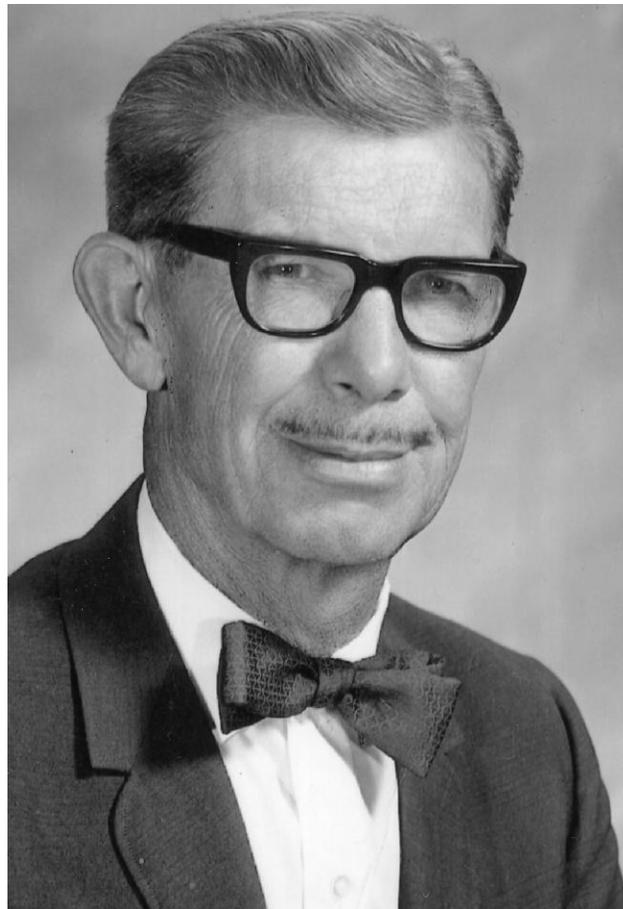
^{DIED}
DECEMBER 6, 1977

we called him "PAPPY"

At his passing, Earl's sister, Mary, who was unable to attend the funeral wrote, "I have always loved Earl and admired him very much."

Earl was always ready with a quip at appropriate times, such as when Jo learned about her listing in Who's Who. He told the family that he supposed that made him What's What! How that wit would be missed! Among Earl's hobbies were fishing, gardening, macramé and woodworking. He was an excellent craftsman at any project he undertook, whether it was building furniture or fixing a cantankerous screen door. He was missed greatly by Jo and by the rest of the family. They missed his ready smile, his cheerful demeanor, his generosity of spirit and of pocketbook.

Though it was difficult, Jo made the adjustment to life without Earl with grace and serenity. Jo's dignity in grief was an example for all the family as they supported her in widowhood.



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