



Edith Marine Mills

December 9, 1916 - September 8, 2020

The year was 1916.

America was in the middle of World War I and President Woodrow Wilson was in office.

A loaf of bread was about \$.07 and a stamp was \$.02.

The main mode of transportation, your feet. If you didn't walk to work, you rode horses, pulled wagons, or dodged trolleys, thus the name of the "Brooklyn Dodgers." It would be another 20 years before most Americans owned a car.

The light switch was invented, a luxury as most homes didn't have electricity, plumbing, a phone, or even a stove.

Perhaps a favorite fact for local readers, Kern County Union High School won its first of 35 section championships.

It was also the first year the Great Kern County Fair was held.

Most importantly to a family in mourning, Edith Marine Boen Mills was born.

Edie, as she was known to most, joined this world December 9, 1916.

Born in Oark, Arkansas, to William Lafayette Boen and Mary Lucille Lewis Boen, she was one of eleven.

She was raised on simple values of great importance; work hard, be honest, never steal, believe in God.

The oldest daughter, her family relied on her and it was evident at an early age that Edie would do whatever was needed to support her family.

She never finished the 3rd grade and spent her time caring for her younger siblings, harvesting crops, and preserving food to last through the winter. Her childhood and teen years, although the word teenager had not yet been coined, were spent in the wild and untamed Ozark mountains where you walked, rode a horse, or traveled by covered wagon.

A favorite story of hers, the night black panthers circled her home while her father was away. She recounted time after time how the panthers were impossible to see in the dark of the night, but could be heard grumbling outside. Never afraid of a challenge, she and her mother protected the house and chased the panthers off. Captivated by this story for years, many of us tried to determine if in fact there were black panthers in Arkansas at that time. After all, it was Arkansas, not Africa, Asia, or South America where black panthers are typically found. We should have known better than to question her, because in 2015 there was a confirmed black panther sighting in Arkansas and there has been one every year since.

When she turned 17, her family bought their first Model-T and moved to Hinton, Oklahoma in search of work.

It was a move full of new beginnings, A new home, a new job, and a new last name.

She married Brice Mills at 19, on January 14, 1936. A year later their first child, Jimmy L. Mills was born. Another year later, the young family moved west, landing in Bakersfield in 1938.

In Bakersfield, Brice and Edie would welcome four more children, Roy James, Lorene, Donald Wayne, and Virgil Dean.

Edie would eventually raise the children on her own, holding three to four jobs at a time just to put food on the table. A single mother of five, times were tough, but as she would proclaim for the rest of her life, God carried her through.

During the day she labored, picking cotton, sweeping train cars, and washing laundry at San Joaquin Hospital. At night, she read her bible. Her children worked with her or on her hip. She said she was proud to provide for them,

adding that they always had food on the table, clothes on their backs, and God in their heart. She retired from Cal Almond at the age of 75, working longer than most ever do just to provide for her family.

She would see to it that all of her children graduated from High School. The same values of hard work, honesty, and faith instilled in them that her parents taught to her. Those values transferred to her grandchildren, all of which would graduate from college or become experts in their field. It was a cycle that would continue through the generations, all because of her.

The years passed by and her children married and had children of their own. She'd live to meet 19 grandchildren, more than 45 great grandchildren, and over 16 great-great grandchildren. Each held a special place in her heart. Edith passed away September 8, 2020 at the age of 103. She was nearly two months shy of her 104th birthday. She is survived in death by all of her children, all but three grandchildren, and all great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

She was the matriarch of our family. A strong, spiritual woman whom we loved dearly. Her time on earth was remarkable. From cooking over a fire to microwaves, the telegraph to cell phones, covered wagons to self driving cars, she witnessed history, but it was her personal history that made her truly special in our eyes. We will never forget the way she cared for us, how she encouraged us to never give up, to work hard, to be a good person, and we will certainly never forget the way her twangy country voice sounded when she reminded us, "You need to trust in God."

Edith will be laid to rest at Greenlawn Southwest Cemetery Friday, September 18th at 9:00 a.m. Those wishing to pay their respects are encouraged to find a bible and read Psalm 23, one of her favorite scriptures. Donations may also be made to Victorville First Nazarene Church in her honor.

Cemetery Details

Greenlawn Southwest

2739 Panama Ln
Bakersfield, CA 93313

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **16**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Mission Family Mortuary
531 California Ave
Bakersfield, CA 93304
1 (661) 323-3339
<https://missionfamilymortuary.com/>

Graveside

SEP **18**. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (PT)

Greenlawn Southwest
2739 Panama Ln
Bakersfield, CA 93313