

NECROLOGIES

LOLA CLARK PEARSON

1871—1951

Mrs. Lola Clark Pearson died at the age of 79 at her home at 2645 N.W. 24th street, Oklahoma City. She had been associate editor of the Farmer-Stockman magazine for 20 years.

Born near Elwood, Clinton County, Iowa on November 29th, 1871, she was the oldest of nine children of Lydia Burgin and Thomas Jefferson Clark. Her mother was of German parentage and her father's people came to Iowa from Pennsylvania. She attended Cornell College at Mt. Vernon, and went to Pierson, Iowa, as the principal of the High School. There she met John Cannon Pearson, whom she married on September 6, 1899. Children of this marriage were Lola Agnes Pearson, died in infancy; Marion Pearson, married Dewey H. Neal; John C. Pearson Jr., married Ila Florence; Clark William Pearson, married Gladys Moore.

John Cannon Pearson was born near Kendal, England, on July 19, 1862. He came to America in 1884, and settled near Kingsley, Iowa, later moving to Pierson, Iowa, where he carried on successful ventures in farming, in the lumber and meat business, building a telephone exchange, and building and operating grain elevators. He was a charter member of the Modern Woodmen of America, a member of Eastern Star and a Mason, becoming a 32nd degree Mason and a member of Scottish Rite. He became a citizen of the United States, and was elected City Recorder, School Treasurer, and Mayor of Pierson.

In 1902 John Cannon Pearson took his wife to visit his relatives in England. Three years later the sale of his grain elevator to a local Farmer's Elevator company caused him to look for a new location. After much consideration he selected Marshall, Oklahoma, loaded an emigrant car with their household goods, driving team and wagon and buggy, and rode in the caboose to Marshall.

His wife came five days later. They bought a house and a grain elevator, which he immediately enlarged. With a brother, he bought an elevator at Douglas, nine miles north of Marshall, and built two cotton giné and a house to store seed cotton. They also had elevators at Billings and Red Rock.

John Cannon Pearson served Marshall as mayor and president of the Chamber of Commerce and was active in Masonic as well as many phases of civic work. Mrs. Pearson organized the first Marshall Woman's Club, and was a member of the school board. She was elected District President of the Women's Federated Clubs, and served as State President from 1919 to 1921.

Mrs. Pearson's direction of the work of the federation with the foreign-born attracted attention from several national organizations, and more than 160,000 copies were published of pamphlets which she wrote on the subject. She was Chairman of Americanization, General Federation of Women's Clubs, from 1920 to 1923; Chairman of American Citizenship 1923 to 1932; was parliamentarian from 1935 to 1938.

When the Pearsons came to Marshall in 1905, the town had wide main streets, no sidewalks, ankle deep mud. It had two banks, several saloons, stores, a flour mill and three elevators. The Pearsons helped build the town, and had deep roots there all their lives. But their interests extended

to several parts of the state. Elevator owners built the Capitol Grain and Elevator company in Oklahoma City in 1907, and Mr. Pearson was president of this company until the building burned in 1921.

In that year Mrs. Pearson became associate editor of the *Oklahoma Farmer*, doing her work chiefly in Marshall, with frequent trips to Oklahoma City. The following year she became Home Editor, a position which she held until its merger with the *Oklahoma Stockman*. She then served as associate editor of the "Good Cheer" section, and on February 15, 1927, her name appeared alone on the masthead, where it stayed for eighteen years. From 1926 until 1928 she also edited the department "Women and the World's Work" for *Household Magazine*, published in Topeka, Kansas, in addition to work as vice-chairman of the Republican State Committee, 1921-1928.

As an editor, Lola Clark Pearson kept her page living up to its title of the "Good Cheer" page. She traveled widely, both within and without the state. In addition to other material she brought back to offer her readers, she usually returned with comments and feature stories of what people were doing to make their own bit of the world a better place in which to live.

She offered her readers not only the whole gamut of home-making and bits of cheer and inspiration, but summaries of political issues in language they could understand. She never missed an opportunity to write in support of needed legislation, and on behalf of organizations in which she believed. She had served as vice-chairman of the Red Cross in Logan County during the first World War and was awarded the Red Cross medal for outstanding service. As an editor, she continued to urge support of the Red Cross, as well as the Tuberculosis Association, the Bureau of Maternity and Infancy, the Oklahoma Library Commission, and other needed activities.

Long before Oklahoma had thought of a summer round-up of children for physical examination before school entry, she was advocating this community practice. Vigorously she wrote of the need for legislation and public support of venereal disease control. When bills were before the legislature she told her readers in simple, uncompromising terms what was good and what was bad. She told her readers of important national affairs, what they meant, and where they could learn more about them. Always she had faith in their intelligence.

Her editorial duties included much work with the 4-H clubs. She attended meetings of the county federations, and wrote of 4-H girls and their individual projects in making better homes. Contests burdened her desk; the paper offered large prizes for the best gardens and canning budgets, and a prize for every letter helpful enough to be published on the "Good Cheer" page. When the five Oklahoma Master Farm Home Makers were chosen each year, she wrote a little story recognizing the services of each one. She reported the changes that the churches, clubs, the Indian agents, the missionaries and the home demonstration agents had accomplished in the Indian way of life over a long period of years.

In 1942 she was made an honorary member of the Oklahoma 4-H clubs, in recognition of her services to them.

Mr. Pearson retired from active business in 1931, and six years later they moved to Oklahoma City where two of their children, John and Marion, lived. Mrs. Pearson then had her office in the Farmer-Stockman section of the Oklahoman Building. All through the second World War, she kept at her desk and her page challenged the thinking of her large reader audience. With its end, she wrote an editorial which embodied that viewpoint which had always been hers:

"We want our men home but some of them must remain on duty. . . . And if we don't finish the job, God help us. Either the spiritual side of

human endeavor must catch up with the material or we shall perish by our own inventions. The joy of it is that from here on out our job can be one of construction rather than destruction. We can have a share in building a better home, a better nation, a better world. But only if we keep the faith. In God and in ourselves as his instruments for good. And as we determine not to fail Him in this time of reconstruction."

The last editorial appeared in December, 1945. Freed from her desk, Mrs. Pearson continued to give her time and inspiration to her many friends and organizations. She was a member of the League of Women Voters, Daughters of the American Revolution, Indiana Academy of Science, League of American Pen Women, Order of Eastern Star and the Cosmopolitan Club. Her church affiliation was with the Wesley Methodist church.

In 1949, the Pearsons celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. A partnership of unusual devotion was broken by his death the following year.

One of Lola Clark Pearsons' last public appearances was made in November, 1950, when she spoke at the Creative Arts Forum sponsored by the Oklahoma City Branch of the National League of American Pen Women. Her warm clear voice, with no trace of weakness or faltering, held her listeners breathless as she told them of women's work and all that it implies.

Early in December she became ill with heart disease, and died on January 31, 1951. Burial was in Memorial Park Cemetery, Oklahoma City.

The warmth of her personality, her kindness and generosity, her gentle dignity and broad tolerance, her sympathetic understanding, and her great common sense, are all recorded on the printed page. The editorials she wrote, the timeless quality of much of what she said, the spirit with which she defended her principles, make a monument to one of the finest of Oklahoma pioneer women.

By Edith Copeland

Norman, Oklahoma

JAMES MONROE BYRUM, M.D.

1871—1950

When a man has lived for nearly fifty years in one community and has spent that time in public service, and has made no enemies, surely it speaks well for him. When a man dies and the whole county grieves about his passing, when men and women and children feel that they have lost a kind personal friend, this tells a story of faithfulness, trust, and devotion to duty. Such a man was Dr. James M. Byrum, who died in Shawnee, Oklahoma, December 11, 1950.

Doctor Byrum was born in Monroe county, Tennessee, July 19, 1871, son of Peter and Mary (Cavette) Byrum. The family is of Scotch-Irish origin, descendants of early settlers of East Tennessee, and the Carolinas. Peter and Mary Byrum with their three sons and two daughters moved to Charlotte, Arkansas, in 1881. There the children received a common school education. Doctor Byrum attended high school at Sulphur Rock, Arkansas, and later the University of Arkansas, where he prepared himself to teach school. But after a few years teaching school, he decided to study medicine, and studied with well known physicians and surgeons, Doctors Kennerly, and Dorr, of Batesville, Arkansas. Later he attended the Tennessee Medical college, and graduated with the class of 1900. After spending a year in the City Hospital at Memphis as interne, he returned to his home town,

Sulphur Rock, and started practice there. But he felt the irresistible call of the West: "Go West and grow up with the country."

Oklahoma Territory was frontier country then, and the little town of Asher, in Pottawatomie County gave promise of growing into a city. Doctor Byrum located there, and helped materially with building the community. After living in Asher a year he returned to his home town, Sulphur Rock, and was married on January 29, 1903 to Miss Leah Knox, daughter of Captain and Mrs. T. C. Knox, of Mississippi, and a relative of President James Knox Polk.

Doctor Byrum brought his bride to the home he had prepared for her in the little town of Asher, and immediately they became identified with the social and religious life of the community. Already a Past Master of the Masonic Fraternity he organized a Masonic Lodge in Asher, and became its first Master. Their only child, Judge J. Knox Byrum was born at Asher. In 1908 Doctor Byrum moved his family to Shawnee where he established his career as physician, and surgeon. From that time until his death, he and his family were prominent in all the better development of the City, and Community.

Doctor Byrum was a consistent member of the Central Presbyterian church, and on its board of Deacons: a 32nd degree Mason, member of Lodge 107, A. F. and A. M. Shawnee chapter 32, R.A.M. Shawnee council 26, R and S.M., and Shawnee commandery No. 36 Knights Templar, a member of the Shrine (India Temple). He was also a member of the Lions club and the Elks Lodge.

Before his death Doctor Byrum was the oldest living past president of the Oklahoma Medical society, Past President of the Pottawatomie county Medical Society, and for twenty years was secretary of the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Examiners. He was also a member of the Southern Medical Association, and of the American Medical Association. During the past year Doctor Byrum had received two fifty year recognition pins: One was from the University of Tennessee for fifty years of medical practice, and one from Masonic bodies in recognition of fifty years of service and membership.

Doctor Byrum and his beloved wife brought to this community the gracious spirit and culture that has helped establish the social standing and refinement of the community. Their home always embodied the highest type of charm and hospitality, the chivalric spirit of the "Old South." Lovers of books their library was usually large and interesting. He was a devoted husband, father and friend.

Doctor Byrum brought to his profession a sympathetic understanding of human frailties, as well as a skill born of keen interest and profound, continual study. His patience and kindness was never failing.

—Florence Drake.

Shawnee, Oklahoma