



By Tina Kitt

The Wauneta Breeze

Their lives' journeys included stints in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, Coast Guard service in the Asiatic Pacific Theatre during World War II, and successful business careers in North Platte.

But in the end, home to Cliff "Peck" and Elizabeth "Betty" Boyce was Wauneta — even though they hadn't lived here in more than 50 years.

Recently their daughter, Paige Eaves of Peyton, Colo., returned to Wauneta with her husband, Jon, to honor her parents' wishes that a portion of their estate go back to this community. She presented one check for \$30,000 to the Wauneta Community Foundation—the amount needed to declare Wauneta new's medical clinic building fully paid for—and another check for \$70,000 to be used to purchase new equipment for the clinic as needed.

Peck Boyce died in 1987, long before the recent effort to have a new medical clinic built in Wauneta was launched. Before he died, however, he and Betty discussed the manner in which they would like to have their estate settled. They agreed that if finances allowed they would like to help fund a medical facility in Wauneta.

Betty was an expert in the field of medical records, and it seemed only natural that the Boyces' bequeathal be related to health care.

"Dad's foremost wish was that Mom be comfortably cared for in her senior years," said Paige. "But if they could, they wanted to pass along money to this community."

Betty outlived Peck by more than 20 years, passing away this past March. In a letter to the foundation announcing the \$100,000 provision in Betty's will, her attorney explained that the gift was made in honor of Peck's long-standing roots in the area.

Pioneering families

Both of Peck's parents came from families who homesteaded on Wauneta's South Divide in the Eden and Ash Grove rural communities in the late 1800s.

His father, Clarence Boyce, was the son of Gilbert and Eliza Boyce, who homesteaded in northeast Dundy County. Peck's mother, Maggie, was the daughter of Amos and Sarah Rowley, who also homesteaded in northeast Dundy County.

Peck was born in 1917 and grew up along with his brother, Marion, on the family farm south of Wauneta.

In 1942, during World War II, he answered the nation's call by entering the Coast Guard. While he was in the service in the Pacific Northwest he met and married Betty Ryerson of Seattle, Wash.

During his three years in the service, Peck served in the Asian Pacific Theatre. When the war ended, he and Betty, along with their young daughter, Paige, moved to the family farm in 1946.

Betty embraced farm life, said Paige, taking an active role in the local extension club and serving as a 4-H leader.

Paige attended high school in Wauneta through her junior year after which the Boyce family moved to North Platte. There, Peck went to work at Cornhusker Equipment, later becoming a partner in the business. Betty began her career in the field of medical records at Memorial Hospital. Her next goal was to obtain her certification as a Medical Records Librarian. After obtaining her certification, she traveled extensively throughout Nebraska, Kansas and Wyoming, doing consultation work for various hospitals.

Her parents never earned tremendous salaries, notes Paige, but were still able to take care of their family's needs while building a nest egg to leave to the little town in southwest Nebraska that had meant so much to them.

"This gift is a credit to their sense of community and sense of duty," said Paige. "After Dad died, Mom did an outstanding job of tending to her finances. This donation is a testament to her money-managing capabilities."

While the Boyce family doesn't have any direct descendents still living in the Wauneta today, there are several extended family members, including Eddie Nichols who is a second cousin and was close friends to Peck and Betty.

Clinic a community success

With this recent gift, the construction costs of the clinic have now been covered entirely by donations.

"No tax money has been used to fund this project," stresses Tony Cribelli, a member of the clinic's oversight committee. Other committee members include Brian Harchelroad and Nichols.

Fundraising for the project was spearheaded by the Wauneta Community Foundation. The clinic is staffed and managed by Chase County Hospital, with medical practitioners available in Wauneta each weekday.

Plans are being made to have a new clinic sign erected in the corner of the parking lot and a donor recognition wall is also being prepared to recognize those who have contributed to the project.

Future contributions to the medical clinic will be used to purchase equipment or to fund an endowment to make sure future expenses are covered.

Efforts are ongoing to locate a pharmacy on the east side of the building. Until that happens, however, same-day prescription delivery service to the Wauneta Clinic is provided by Adams Drug of Imperial.