



Russell Wayne Birch has been reunited with his wife, Lola, of seventy and a half years for all eternity. Russell was born December 15, 1926 and he passed away October 3, 2019 at CHI St. Francis Medical Center in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Funeral services will be 10:30 a.m. Monday, October 7, 2019 at the United Methodist Church in Burwell, Nebraska. Burial will be in Cottonwood Cemetery in Burwell. Pastor Dennis Davenport will officiate. Visitation will be one hour before the service at the church. Memorials are suggested to the family. Hitchcock Funeral Home in Burwell is in charge of arrangements.

Russ was born at home in Rock County, Nebraska to Lester and Ella (Van Houten) Birch. He attended a country school thru the eighth grade. He then helped his parents on the farm. He met Lola Combs when her parents invited his family over for a watermelon feed. As he tells it they met in a watermelon patch. They dated for two and a half years and were married September 30, 1946 in Burwell. She was seventeen and he was nineteen.

This union produced three daughters, Ella May, Beverly (Kay) and Shirley June. Ella May passed away at the age of six months.

Russ and Lola moved to Missouri where Russ and his brother-in-law, Frank Porter opened an automotive repair shop. When he was drafted into the United States Army in 1951 they closed the shop. He served one year in Korea. He was honorably discharge from the Army and then Russ and Lola moved to Cherry County, Nebraska where he was a ranch hand for two years. They then moved to Hastings, Nebraska for a year. He worked for Devis Baking Company. He was forced to quit there due to lung issues caused by flour. The doctor told him to get an outside job so they moved back to Cherry County where he worked about four more years for two different ranchers.

In 1962 they moved to an acreage north of Grand Island. He had dairy cattle and sold milk by the gallon. He also worked at a Texaco Gas Station at that time and later for Redman mobile homes. In 1979 they bought a different acreage north of Grand Island. They sold their dairy cattle and raised calves. He was still living there when he passed away. He also worked for Insulation Island from 1975 until he retired in 1996 at the age of 70.

Him and Lola and friends liked to listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio on Saturday nights. He tells about taking the battery out of the car to hookup to a radio so they could listen. He also watched all kinds of westerns on TV.

He used to help family members fix what ever was wrong with their cars. Most of the time this was late evening after chores were done. His son-in-law Ron nicknamed him the midnight mechanic.

Russ was preceded in death by his wife Lola, an infant daughter Ella May, his parents, one brother, Clarence Birch, a sister, Dorothy Barrow and a son-in-law, Ron Eckles.

Those left to cherish his memory are a daughter Beverly (Kay) Eckles of St. Libory, Nebraska, a daughter Shirley and Philip Mitchell Webb of Cairo, Nebraska. Seven grandchildren, three step-grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, three step great-grandchildren, two great great-grandchildren, two sisters, Doris Herschberger of Albuquerque, New Mexico and Virginia Blackman of Santa Quin, Utah and many nieces and nephews.