

Harry “Dude” and Mary Martin Family



Harry Albert Martin about age 10 soon after moving to Dalton.

Harry Albert Martin was born April 12, 1898 in Bancroft, Nebraska. He was about nine years old when his parents, Herman and Mary Martin, moved their family to Dalton in 1908. Harry was better known as “Dude.” No one knows for sure how he came by that nickname. An explanation that his daughter Elaine heard was that at the time her father was born in 1898, Admiral Dewey was becoming widely known as a hero of the Spanish War. As “Dewey fever” swept the country, Dewey’s likeness was on everything and children were being named for Admiral Dewey or called Dewey affectionately. If little Harry was being called Dewey, it eventually became shortened to “Dude.” And, when he was dressed up like a little man in his best clothes, he probably was thought of affectionately as quite a little “Dude.”

Dude quit school in the 7th or 8th grade so he could work full time. He was very industrious and worked at a number of things, always seeking to improve his stature in the community. He worked for the Dalton Lumber and Co-op, he managed the Standard and later the Texaco service station which was part of the Graff Implement business. He was always there with the rest of the Herman Martin family when they showed movies on the second floor over the drug store on Friday nights, and he was usually on the drums when they played music for dances on Saturday nights. During leap year, the January 1920 *Dalton Delegate* newspaper ran mock advertisements offering the town’s most eligible bachelors. The advertisement stated, “Harry ‘Dude’ Martin: A first class article. Jewels taken in exchange: pearls preferred.” At that time, Dude was seeing a girl named Pearl who lived in the nearby Gurley area.



Dude Martin about age 29 in 1927.

But it wasn’t long before Dude had his eye on Mary Panabaker, who lived on a farm outside of Dalton. Dude was busy with his work in town and Mary rarely was able to come into town. So, they did much of their courting by mail and they wrote many letters back and forth. With the postman having served as cupid, they were married on Valentine’s Day, 1927 and honeymooned in Denver. Dude and Mary established “Dude’s Place” café in Dalton. It was a popular establishment and everyone loved Mary’s cooking. They had a daughter Elaine, born in Dalton in May 1935. Dude and Mary continued to operate the café until

they moved to Denver in March 1940. There Dude managed apartments for a time, and later worked for a Denver lumber company until he retired in 1970. Dude died in Denver in August, 1977 at the age of 78, and Mary died in May, 1997. Their daughter Elaine and her husband Ron Kinnes live in the Denver area. Elaine and Ron have two sons, Gregg and Dwight, and two daughters, Karen and Paula.



Dude and Mary Martin in home in Denver, November 1957.