

Eve Bowring

devoted to

Nebraska

Eva Kelly, also called Eve, was born Jan. 9, 1892, in Nevada, Missouri. She had four sons with Theodore Forrester, one of whom died shortly after birth. In 1924, when the marriage began to fail, Eve moved with her sons to Lincoln, Neb., to be near her mother. She later divorced Forrester.

Eve then became a life insurance agent and later a traveling salesperson for the Norfolk Steam Bakery. She met Arthur Bowring in the fall of 1927 when her car broke down near his ranch during one of her sales trips. They married April 13, 1928.

Arthur, born April 20, 1873, in Dow City, Iowa, filed his first 160-acre claim under the Homestead Act in 1894 at the age of 21 in Cherry County. In 1908, he married Anna Mable Holbrook, a school teacher, but she and their infant son died during childbirth in 1909.

At the time he met Eve, Arthur was raising shorthorn cattle, but after studying market reports and learning about the Hereford breed, Eve persuaded him to switch the herd to the popular whitefaced cattle. She picked the first four registered Hereford heifers purchased at the Ed Belsky sale on Oct. 14, 1930. Through years of trials and tribulations, they grew their ranch near Merriman into a 12,000-acre spread known as the Bar 99 Ranch.

Arthur and Eve Bowring were energetic people who strongly believed in serving their community and country. Arthur served in the Nebraska House of Representatives from 1927 to 1930 and the Nebraska Senate from 1930 to 1933. Among other positions, he also served as justice of the peace, county commissioner and school board member.

After Arthur's death in 1944, Eva successfully operated the ranch for the next 41 years. In 1954, she became the first female U.S. senator for the state of Nebraska after being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the death of Sen. Dwight P. Griswold. She did not run for re-election but continued her public service, including two six-year terms on the Federal Board of Parole.

Prior to Eve's death in 1985, she donated her estate to the Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation in memory of Arthur. She arranged for the Bar 99 Ranch to be preserved as a state historical park and a working Hereford ranch in perpetuity.

