

Eula (Pearl) Carter Scott
By Jeannie Barbour

Eula (Pearl) Carter was born on December 9, 1915 to George and Lucinda Carter. Pearl was raised with sisters Opaletta and Jewell Arnetta, brother George, and adopted brother Will in Marlow, Oklahoma. Blind since age sixteen, Pearl's father George overcame many adversities to become a successful businessman. "Never give up..." was often heard in the Carter household as Pearl was growing up. ¹ "I would read the paper to him (George), I'd read the headlines and if he wanted to hear the article, I would read it," explained Pearl. "That's the way he taught me to pronounce words and to read. Then, well - he thought that I could do just about anything and I tried because he couldn't and I could."

Naturally inquisitive and mature beyond her years, Pearl was involved in many activities as a child. She and her siblings played musical instruments and were known as the Carter Band. Pearl played the violin and the saxophone. She won several awards for her performances at the District Fine Arts Meet in Duncan, Oklahoma. Pearl learned to drive when she was eleven years old. Given to her by her father George, her first car was a Durant Sport Roadster. "It was the prettiest little old thing and it had the little jump seat in it." ² Pearl would drive her father to and from work each day.

George and Lucinda Carter enjoyed hosting parties and entertaining guests. "We fixed benches and put up lights and everything...everybody that wanted to play (croquette) would come at night. Momma would always have lemonade," Pearl remembers. ³ Oklahoma governors and legislators, and members of the United States Congress were frequent visitors to the Carter home. Pearl's favorite visitor was famed aviator Wiley Post. "Wiley had only one eye...Dad was of course, blind." ⁴ The impaired sight of both men created a bond between them.

George Carter was intrigued with airplanes and was Post's first passenger after he soloed. ⁵ "...After they came down, I was so interested and I looked that plane over from top to bottom and I asked Wiley a million questions," recalls Pearl. ⁶ With George's permission Post took Pearl up for her first flight. "Wiley said you hold this stick real lightly and put your feet on the rudders and feel what it does. So he started my first lesson on my first flight." ⁷

With Post's help, Pearl convinced her father to buy a plane. After completion of an airstrip and hanger, George asked Post to pick out a plane for his daughter. Post chose the Curtiss Robin. The three - seat monoplane came off the assembly line in the spring of 1928 with a 90-hp Curtiss OX-5 engine - the same engine that powered Curtiss JN-4 Jenny trainers in World War I. The Robin was built similar to the famous Lindbergh plane *Spirit of St. Louis* and featured a welded fuselage built of rugged steel tubing. Except for the cowling, the plane was entirely fabric - covered. Orange with black trim, George bought the plane for \$4,500. ⁸

Pearl soloed on September 12, 1928 and continued to fly until 1935. She enjoyed acrobatics and once piloted the famous Winnie Mae. "We flew by the seat of our pants," said Pearl. "We had an oil gage, speedometer, and altimeter. And that's the only four instruments we had." ⁹

Pearl would often sit and listen to her father and Wiley Post discussing politics, current events, and new adventures proposed by the aviator. With Australian-American aviator Harold Charles Gatty as navigator, Post made front page headlines for flying around the world in July 1933. Later he set a high altitude record for flying almost 55,000 feet and reaching the stratosphere. "In doing so, he discovered the jet stream and invented the pressurized oxygen suit."¹⁰ "One day, Wiley told me: 'Half-pint. One of these days, man is going to land and walk on the moon.' He said, 'It won't be in mine or George's lifetime; it might not even be in your lifetime. But one of these days man will walk on that moon.' The night that they landed on the moon I had the eeriest feeling. It was a bright moon-lit night and I just had to go outside to look...I could feel Dad and Wiley standing beside me saying, 'We told you.'"¹¹

In the mid 1930's Pearl experienced the sudden loss of the two men most influential in her life. In August 1935 Wiley Post was killed while on a sightseeing trip. He and American humorist Will Rogers died when the plane Post was piloting crashed near Point Barrow, Alaska. One year later, Pearl's father passed away after a sudden illness.

Today, at age eighty-five, Pearl looks back at a life of adventure and achievement. She has been featured in Oklahoma Today magazine and hailed as the youngest aviatrix in United States history. Pearl has been inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame, and the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame. In addition to her many achievements, Pearl was employed by an air circus as a stunt flyer. She has also worked at the Chickasaw Housing Authority in Duncan. She was one of the first Chickasaw Community Health Representatives and served three terms as a Chickasaw legislator. Married to Lewis Scott in 1931, Pearl raised three children.

On her eightieth birthday, Pearl's grandsons Carter and Bill (both pilots) arranged for her to fly a King Air Turbo Jet-9 over the Gulf of Mexico. At the airport, Pearl entertained pilots with stories of early aviation exploits. Once in the air, Pearl took the controls. When asked where would be the safest place for Pearl to fly, the tower replied, "anywhere she wants to go."¹²

¹ Pearl Scott. Interview by Joey Lansdale and Stacey Wesberry, transcript, Marlow, Ok. August, 1999. George carter often encouraged his children to overcome life's obstacles -"to never give up.{if} you get knocked down, just get mad and show them." This philosophy came to George after years of hardship dealing with his loss of sight.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Aimee J. Downs and Louisa McCune. "The Pioneer," Oklahoma Today, July/August 1998, vol. 48, No. 5, 83.

⁶ Ibid. Pearl Scott interview by Joey Lansdale and Stacey Wesberry.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Curtiss Robin. National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institute, http://www.nasm.edu/nasm/AERO/AIRCRAFT/curtiss_i1.htm

⁹ Ibid. Pearl Scott interview by Joey Lansdale and Stacy Wesberry

¹⁰ Joe Williams. Woolaroc, Bartlesville, Ok: Joe Williams Communications, 1991, 36-39.

¹¹ Ibid. Pearl Scott interview by Joey Lansdale and Stacy Wesberry.

¹² Ibid.