

Notes on Helen Katherine Kirkpatrick and Roland Larson



He called her his "Wild Irish Rose" and she called him "Doc."

Helen told her daughter-in-law Dwyn that before she was married, "We used to clean the house in the morning, sew a dress in the afternoon and go to a dance in the evening." This was awesome, especially because of her having had TB. As a teenager she spent some time in a TB sanatorium trying to get well. She took medication for that the rest of her life. Later she developed emphysema and suffered for years.

She also said that when she was expecting her baby she was as big around as she was tall (under 5 feet tall). She hated being short. She felt it was hard to be dignified when she had to look up at everyone.

She loved her grandchildren enthusiastically. One day she was playing with her little granddaughters, Jan and Lynn in their bedroom. After a bit Jan came in the living room, "Mommy, Grandma needs help." They had been playing train with some cardboard boxes and Helen sat down in one and couldn't get out.



back: Jan, Lynn, middle: Helen, Sean, front: Marni

She loved drawing, also painting in watercolors and oils.

After Roland was in an auto accident and could no longer work, she went back to school to become a nurse. Her home had many valuable momentos her private patients had given her.



Helen's health had always been bad but they both treated the subject with lighthearted wit. One day Helen was talking about her current problems to a visitor in the living room. On the way to his bedroom to take an afternoon nap Roland quipped, "If you live 'til 8 o'clock wake me, I'd like to watch the news."

Roland was a glass-is-half-empty person. One time he was criticized for being so negative. He replied, "I'm trying my darnedest to be happy!"



Roland's Sewing Class

Roland sold sewing machines for a living for a while. His son Henry says he more than once saw him stride up a hill with a sewing machine in each hand. They were heavy in those days.

The summer Roland had his teeth pulled he was in no condition to drive his sales route so Henry drove him from town to town at age 14. [But not in town, of course.] The Arizona roads were mostly deserted in those days. You could see an approaching car for miles before you passed it. But driving and cars were better by then; when Roland was in his teens the hill they lived on was so steep he had to back his car up the road. The fuel was gravity-feed with the gas tank higher than the motor (with no gas pump).

Henry says his dad didn't go to his own 8th grade graduation in 1915. Something about it was his turn to "water" which meant irrigating, which meant going to the main ditch and opening the gate to let water flow, then following the ditch to your place and carefully making sure water went down each row of your garden or flooded each field.