

Austins of America Genealogical Society Files

Helen Elizabeth Keener Austin



Helen E. Austin passed away Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2003, with her daughter Gwen by her side. Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4, at the Alden-Waggoner Funeral Chapel, 5400 Fairview Ave., Boise.

Helen was born Dec. 3, 1906, in Boise, to James and Mary Bell Keener. They lived and ranched on 80 homestead acres in the Valley View District. She attended Belfry and Valley View schools, graduating from Boise High School in 1925.

She married Howard Austin on June 3, 1927. Howard and Helen shared 69 happy years together in Valley View on Coffey Street. Their life was always centered on family, work and helping others. They raised cows, horses and chickens which all had to be milked by hand, then hauled the milk up to Cole Road where the dairy would pick it up. They also had a business clearing fruit trees in Garden City. Helen was a busy homemaker for Howard and their three children, Gwendolyn, Mary, Louise and Jim.

Helen was a member of the Ustick Helping Hand Club that met monthly to make quilts. They always had an extra quilt on hand for anyone who needed one. She was active with the Helping Hand Club until 1995. Howard's work turned to construction, building roads and dams. Helen was by his side in some fairly remote parts of the West. She loved working with him. Together they worked on such projects such as Dworshak Dam and building the first ski jump at Bogus Basin in 1942. Helen would cook for the construction crews, help keep the books and help doing any other chores.

Grange activities were a big part of Helen's life. Howard and Helen spent many happy years with the Valley View Grange. Helen and Howard also enjoyed being members

of the Good Sam Club. They would pull their trailer along with the other Good Sams - always helping out whenever needed. They spent many happy times helping to prepare the Southern Idaho Senior Citizens campground outside of Donnelly. Helen was also an avid bowler and sports fan. She especially enjoyed football and baseball. Helen and Howard attended the BSU football games for many years, even when they were well into their eighties.

After "retirement," Helen and Howard did anything but slow down. They always took pride in their huge garden each summer, always sharing the bounties of their harvest with family, friends and neighbors. Grandma made the BEST homemade applesauce, canned peaches and corn in the world. Her homemade goodies would quite simply "melt in your mouth." Helen always took pride and pleasure in her family, providing many home-cooked meals for family get-togethers. She was a warm and loving spirit and always made people feel at home.

Helen is survived by her daughter, Gwen Walker of Boise; son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Joyce Austin of Springfield, Ore.; grandchildren, Susan Lowe of Beaverton, Ore., Scott Walker of Tucson, Ariz., Sandy Orlovich of Boise, Stephanie Walker of Oregon City, Ore., Cindy Dalton of Portland, Ore., Betsy Austin of Springfield, Ore., Jane Austin of Springfield, Ore., Jay Austin of Springfield, Ore., Ginny Wright of Everett, Wash., and Diana Foss of Everett, Wash. She is also survived by special nephews and nieces, Ed and Martha Keener of Boise, Dorothy Keener and Bill Gray of Boise, and Ed Austin of Rochester, NY. Due to her vibrant 96 years, Helen is also loved and remembered by many great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Helen was preceded in death by her loving husband of 69 years, Howard; her parents; sister, Edith Caldwell; brother, Keith Keener; and daughter, Mary Lou Hathaway. The family wishes to thank the many neighbors, friends and special people who loved and helped Helen in her later years.

Memorial donations may be made to the Boise Rescue Mission, 520 Front St., Boise, ID 83702; or the Idaho Youth Ranch, 7025 W. Emerald, Boise, ID 83704. To Helen: "Mother, Grandma, Friend ... You lived your life as a glowing example of the Golden Rule. You will forever be in our hearts and memories. We Love You!"

REFERENCE

The Idaho Statesman of Boise, ID. Obituaries 12/1/2003